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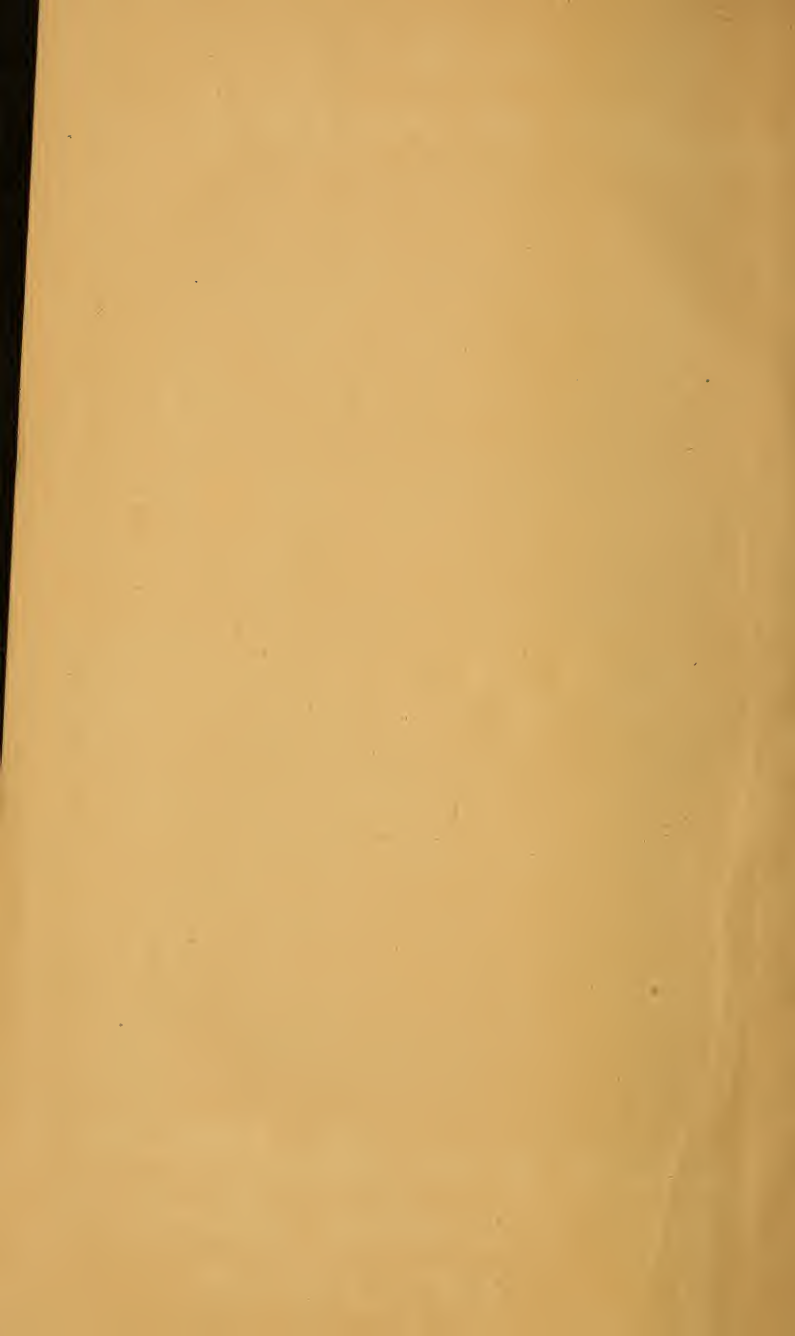
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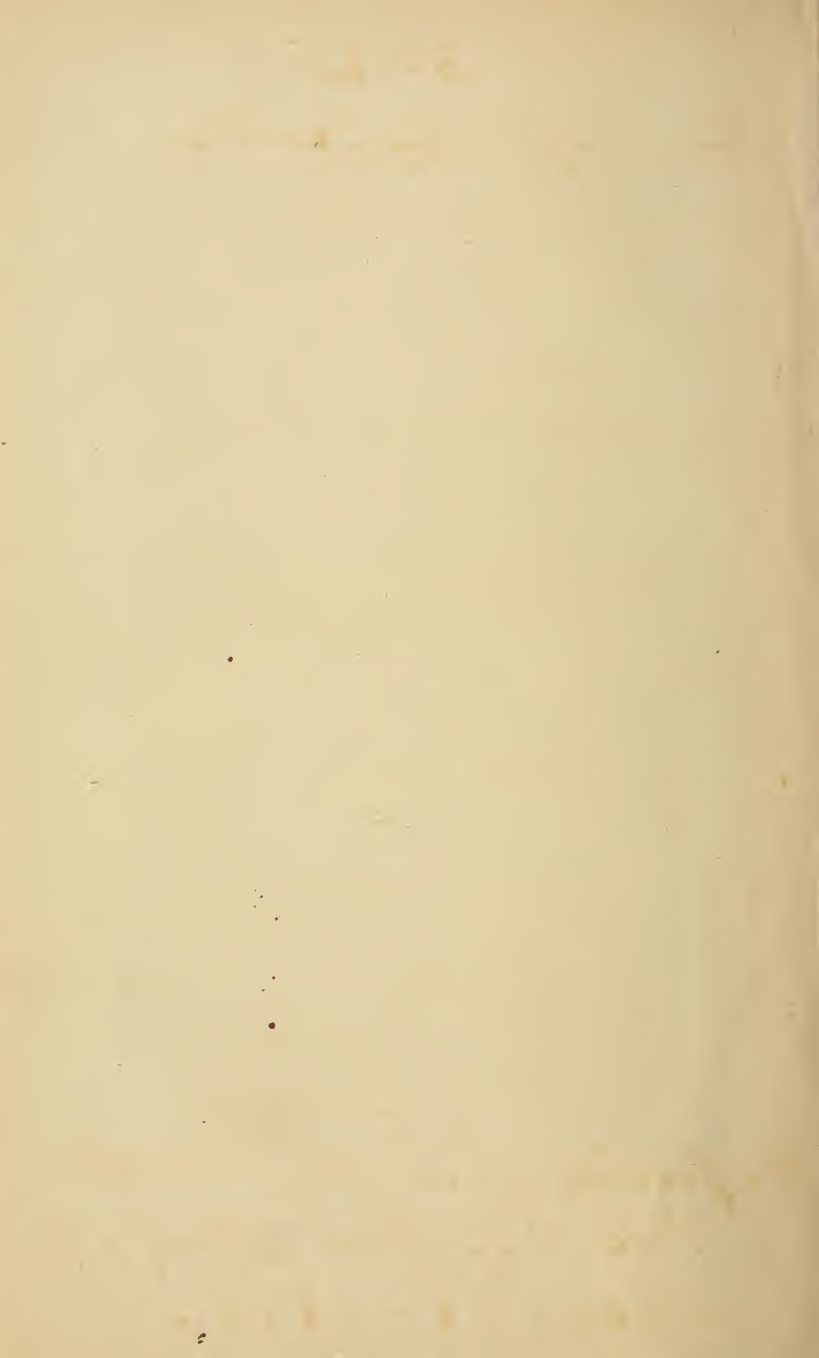
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NOTES

OF THE

MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR THE TIMES,

Drawn from the Holy Scriptures.

BY

CHARLES ADAMS.



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INTRODUCTION.

AN effort is made in the following pages to delineate, with simplicity and brevity, the Scriptural picture of a Christian minister. Many excellent books have appeared, at different periods, specially designed for the aid and benefit of the ministry; yet with none of these, it is hoped, will this volume interfere. A mere *description* is its scope,—an humble endeavour to mark the ambassador of Christ by the infallible notes of inspiration. It is a growing conviction of the author, that we cannot too constantly and sacredly abide within the Bible atmosphere, in order to the clear perception of saving truth. All here “is profitable.” Here is true wisdom and eternal life. Declining from this to any human standard of ministerial qualifications and character, we put in peril the truth on so important a theme, and may expect, at

the best, but a partial approach toward the genuine *ideal* of an ambassador of the Lord Jesus. Who shall portray for us one of God's ministers but God himself? "Should not a people seek unto their God? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

But the book here presented to the public assumes, by no means, to be the first to exhibit the Biblical idea of a gospel minister. Nor does it at all assume to have developed this idea more exactly, fully, or happily, than it has been done before by wiser and better men. The author only claims to have taken his eye away from most that men have thought and written, and to have inquired at the mouth of God.

In publishing the results of such inquiry, he is aware that he lays himself open to criticism. The form of the composition may be deemed peculiar, and not answering faithfully to the canons of correct taste. The style may, in some respects, seem

equally peculiar ; while, also, there will be discerned a degree of repetition, as well of remark as of Scripture quotation, arising mainly from the plan of the book. Nor, further, would it be strange if some exceptions should be taken at what might seem too great a minuteness of detail in respect to the traits of character enumerated.

The author begs leave, in forestalling these and similar strictures, simply to refer again to the object in view ; namely, with materials drawn from that volume which belongs to the race, and to the latest age of probation, to bring out a straightforward, perspicuous, and faithful view of a perfect Christian minister—a minister for the times, and for all time.

Nor is he disposed to conceal that “the times” have not been without their influence in prompting him to this effort. He was reminded that the sun of this passing century is hanging in awful sublimity near its meridian ;—that his own years, and those of his brethren, are hastening by, and are about to be finished ;—that,

meanwhile, the sounds from the four winds are unusual. Nations are heaving—thrones are tottering—barriers are breaking—freedom is advancing—anti-christ is weeping—angels are looking ;—and if, in this world's history, there was ever a time for Christ's ministers to be awake—to be strong, and labour, and hope, is it not at this Present ?

With impressions like these, the author wrote what follows. Such as the book is, it is submitted to a candid public, and especially to his younger brethren in the ministry, with devout prayer that it may interest and encourage some one or more that are longing for the largest usefulness.

June 1, 1849.

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Part First.

THE MINISTER FOR THE TIMES
AS A MAN.

NOTES

OF

THE MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR THE TIMES.

1.

"Being justified."—Rom. v, 1.

THE minister for the times is a *pardoned* man. He has repented of sin, and forsaken it. He has sought mercy, and obtained it. He has entered into the great and mysterious grace of justification by faith. He has seen himself an utter sinner—he has beheld his moral nakedness. He has compared himself with the law of God, and has clearly beheld his native and practical character to have been that of a transgressor. He has seen himself, by the law, utterly, irretrievably, and eternally condemned. He has profoundly felt that of himself he is lost, and, under this conviction, has fled to *another*. He has looked to Christ, as the wounded Israelites looked upon the brazen serpent. He has contemplated another's righteousness—the "righteousness of God;"—a righteousness perfect—sublime—infinite. This righteousness has been proffered to himself, with which, as with a garment of celestial

beauty, he may clothe his nakedness. This garment he has ventured to receive,—this he has tremblingly *put on*. To his utter astonishment he has understood and felt that Christ, who knew no sin, has been made sin for the sinner, that he might be made the righteousness of God in Christ. In other words, the infinitely righteous Saviour has come to the sinner—exchanged robes with him, taking upon himself the spotted garment, and throwing upon the “ungodly” His own celestial adorning. Infinite Justice looked, and was satisfied. The dark catalogue of “sins past” sunk as to annihilation. They were not imputed more, but became as though they had never had an existence—as far removed as from angel beings, while he who committed them was counted blameless as angel innocence. Ay, more than this; he is accounted righteous also. For, when the Psalmist writes of the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, Paul observes to us that David is describing the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth *righteousness*. Thus he is pardoned;—thus he is counted righteous through Christ by faith; knowing the grace of Him who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.

He is pardoned. Nor does he live and act in dark uncertainty touching this his gracious state. He has sought and obtained a faith, amounting to a blessed persuasion, that God is reconciled. He knows in whom he has believed. He counts him-

self justified. From the righteousness of God—from the almighty grace of Christ abounding toward him, he removes his eye never. He looks—sees—believes. Under this persuasion he acts; while every act is strangely modified by such persuasion.

II.

“*Christ is all.*”—Col. iii, 11.

THE minister for the times is a *dedicated* man. He has committed himself and everything to Jesus Christ. He has given his being to the Lord, and Christ is his life. He exists, and moves, and acts in Him, because for him to live is Christ. Every thought bends toward Christ, for he has set the Lord always before him. His devotion is full—his dedication is perpetual. His union with Christ is as that of the branch with the stem. Christ is in every word—in every breath. He is ever looking into the glorious countenance of his Saviour. He feels His heavenly breath—he constantly hears His voice. Each whisper of the breeze—each murmur of the brook—each song of sprightly bird—each season as it advances and retires—each storm and calm—each sun and cloud—all men and plants below, and every star of heaven above—all, as they meet the contemplations of this man, are, in his mind, wedded to Christ, the Lord of all, in loved and holy association. With him, nothing is sepa-

rate from the great Sun and Centre of salvation. His eye traces carefully one and all of those golden threads which connect this scene of things with Him by whom and for whom they are and were created. Deeply in his heart he purposes to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. He dwells with Christ as with an elder brother, and often, often speaks to Christ; while Christ responds as often in heavenly whisperings. He looks into his Bible, and certainly hears Christ speaking to him there. He kneels in his closet, and is assured that Christ is listening. Like Isaac, he goes out to meditate at eventide, and Christ is at his side, and he walks with God. He lies down upon his couch, and Christ communes with him in the night-watches. He rises and applies himself to his studies, and has Christ for his teacher. He goes out on his pastoral visits, and in whatever house he enters, whether its inmates be friends or foes, Christ is sure to be one of the company, and hear and approve that faithful warning, or that kind consolation. With Christ he enters the sanctuary, and there his eye is filled with the Lord of the temple. Christ is in every song—in every prayer—in every instruction, lifting up the heart of the consecrated minister with the delicious hope of glory. His head reclines evermore upon the bosom of Jesus, and his every movement is as by the pulsation of that immaculate heart which loved, and pitied, and bled for the world. He ever tends Christward. He ever looks—ever desires—ever receives. He converses with his Lord

as a man converses with his friend. He loves Christ with all his soul, and longs for nothing in the universe so much as to be in all things completely conformed to his Master's will.

III.

"Loss of all things."—Phil. iii, 8.

THE minister for the times is an unworldly man. Dedicated to Jesus, he has, of course, renounced the pomp and glory of this transient world. It enchanted him once,—rising to his vision in all the fascination of brilliant promise, joyous hope, and transcendent beauty. Here was his heaven—the desire of his heart—the idol of his being. In his dream, he forgot that life is a vapour—that time is a span—that beauty and music die—that heaven is all. It is different now. He is transformed in the spirit of his mind. God has met him and touched him. Boundless grace, employing one or another instrumentality, has renewed him. A kind and gentle baptism, like the shower of softest dew, may have fallen upon him; or, more likely, his heart was crushed by disappointment,—earth became suddenly wrapped in gloom,—he turned away, burdened, and weary, and sick, and gave his mortal interest up, and died to earth, and lived henceforth to heaven. The change was complete, and his treasure is no longer on earth, nor his affections or his hopes. Now he is a stranger and a pilgrim.

He is passing, and his home is away in heaven. He meddles not with earthly riches or gain. His desires for fame are crucified. Even his hopes of renown as a Christian and Christian minister, are dismissed. He has set himself as steel against every alluring influence breathed over him, and by which so many beauteous lights have become quenched forever. He receives the great grace, that causes to perish out of his heart the last lingerings of worldliness. Living in the world, he yet lives above it,—treading beneath his feet its pleasures and its prospects. What things were gain to him, those he counts loss for Christ;—yea, doubtless, he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. The position of this minister relatively to this world and its attractions, is very much as we might imagine would be that of an angel spirit who might be deputed to reside here, for a time, on some mission of heavenly mercy. That celestial being, we might suppose, would hasten to accomplish his work. While here, he would feel himself abroad in a foreign and stormy world. He would seek no connexion with earth, other than what might be necessary for the fulfilment of his mission. He would no more think of becoming wedded to this scene of things, than would the weeping exile dream of an attachment to the wild and frightful wilderness where, far from his native home, he roams forlorn. Fading and empty must appear such a world to the visitant from above, and he would long to fin-

ish his work, that he might hasten away to mingle in the far more lovely and desirable scenes of his heavenly home.

Thus the minister for the times. A great and solemn work is before him on earth. He retires presently. The world above waits, with its exceeding rewards, for his coming. He relinquishes earth.

IV.

"Born again."—John iii, 3.

THE minister for the times is a *renewed* man. Christ met him in justification, and gave him the righteousness of God; whereby his sins were buried, and "the ungodly" was counted righteous. This astonishing work was wrought *for* him, and *external* to him; yet, simultaneously with this process, God also wrought *in* him. He changed his habits—his character—his heart. He washed him with the washing of regeneration, and renewed him with the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God came, and worked in him mightily—creating in him a clean heart, and renewing in him a right spirit. His views are changed; for whereas he was once blind, he now sees, and he looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. His desires are changed; for they have risen from the sensual to the spiritual—from earth to heaven. His are unutterable yearnings toward God and Christ. "Whom have I in hea-

ven but thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee," is his earliest and latest song. His tempers and affections are changed. The rough is made plain. The lion is become a lamb. The injurious is become innocent, and the fruits of the Spirit are manifested in him:—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. There is a fresh creation. Old things are passed—all is new. The change from winter's cold and storms, to summer's sweet bloom, is not so great. The change from one world to another world, is not so great. The change from chaos to the new-formed paradise and the green earth, was not so great nor so illustrious. "For, behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, neither come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice forever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people a joy."

Such is the great and radical change that has passed over this minister of the Lord Jesus. The image of Jesus he bears—His spirit he breathes—His mind he possesses—in His nature he participates—with His soul he sympathizes. God has wrought a wondrous work *for* him, for his pardon is written in heaven. God has wrought a wondrous work *in* him, for he is washed;—he is sanctified, as well as justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of his God. Now, as he preaches, he will call men to holiness. He will preach that men should repent. He will turn the hearts of the

people to the Lord their God. He will aim to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus ; and, being a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, much people will be added to the Lord.

V.

"Sons of God."—1 John iii, 2.

THE minister for the times is an *adopted* man. He is adopted of God, and a member of the family of heaven. Once a stranger and a foreigner, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, he is now not only renewed, but exalted to be a son, a child of the Lord. He has received the spirit of adoption, and cries, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.

This, his sublime relation, he never forgets. The contemplation hereof works its influence amid all the steps and movements of his ministry. It aids his renunciation of this world, for here is not the home of his Father's family. It aids his entire consecration to that Christ who has purchased for him such an amazing honour. It aids to produce unbounded trust in that Father who will not suffer one of his little ones to perish. It aids to all-enrapturing views of the heavenly inheritance ; for what will the Lord Almighty not provide for his sons and daughters ! It aids to flee from all uncleanness—to cultivate all holiness ; for such are they to whom He will be a father. It aids to peace-

ableness, gentleness, meekness, modesty, patience, long-suffering, forgiveness, and charity ; for these are the qualities of such as are the children of God. It aids him to endure chastening without despising it, and rebuke without fainting ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. It aids him thus not only to endure, but to rejoice exceedingly in all the tribulations laid upon him—furnishing him, as they do, so important an evidence of his being a child of God ; for what son is he whom his father chasteneth not ? It aids him to follow hard after the Spirit's blessed influences ; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. It aids him to run a mighty race for the souls of men ; for he would elevate all mankind to the same exalted privilege of being the sons of God. It aids and sustains all love and zeal toward God ; for he contemplates God as his father. It aids immeasurably to excite his astonishment in view of the great grace of the gospel ; for behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God ! It aids this minister to look down upon all worldly distinctions, honours, and pleasures as of no account ; for he is a member of the heavenly kindred—and his mansion is prepared on high—and angels are his associates—and Christ is his brother—and God is his everlasting Father.

Such is his sublime relation. He may go forth, and never despond again. He will act, along these eventful years, as a son of the Highest. Let him

lay his hand in his great Father's. He will go with him; and, if he be faithful, he shall be gathered when the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

VI.

"Called of God."—Heb. v, 4.

THE minister for the times is a *commissioned* man. He has not assumed the solemn work and responsibility of a Christian minister without the requisite warrant. He has not presumed to "take upon himself" this honour, as one would undertake a mere worldly profession. He enters not upon this work because earthly kindred may have thus designed, or because the partiality of friends may have judged him adapted and called to so momentous a mission. He has felt himself moved, by a voice above all that is human, to take upon himself this office and work. The Spirit of God has called him;—moved him to prepare body, mind, and heart;—mightily aided his efforts for such preparation;—endued him with power from on high;—lodged the gospel word within his heart as fire shut up in his bones;—filled him with faith and the Holy Ghost, and sent him forth. Advancing thus, the Lord goes with him, and is with him always even unto the end, and works with him with signs following. Opening his mouth, he speaks with authority, and his speech and his preaching are not

with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The saints are instructed—animated—sanctified. The inquirer after salvation sees Christ “set forth,” and believes. The slumberer awakes, and asks what he must do to be saved. This labourer in the gospel never labours in vain, because he is doing the work to which God has called him. A dispensation of the gospel is committed to him. Nor is it optional with him whether he shall proclaim this blessed message, or be silent; for there is a wo upon him if he preaches not the gospel. “Go thou and preach,” is the voice of God to him. Should he decline, it would be at the peril of his happiness; and going “willingly,” his reward is before him.

VII.

“*One thing I do.*”—Phil. iii, 13.

THE minister for the times is a *single-minded* man. He has settled the matter fully and forever, that oneness of pursuit is indispensable to distinguished success in any important enterprise. Salvation is his one sublime purpose, as it was the purpose of his great Master. Here is the goal toward which all his energies tend. He takes no step—touches no book—holds no conversation—writes no line—indulges no recreation, inconsistent with this all-controlling point. A hundred things which many good men, and many ministers, allow in themselves,

this minister cuts off entirely. His meditations are upon the things of his ministry. He gives himself wholly to them, and continues in them. He determines not to know anything among the people save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. His eye looks right on, and his eyelids straight before him. Each book—essay—conversation—anecdote;—each providence, prosperous or adverse;—all heaven, earth, and hell, are laid under contribution for the effecting of his object. He is a man of one work—comprehensively of one book—one thought—one wish. True, he has various accomplishments, and acts amid varied scenes and in varied capacities; still his mind wavers not—the “mark” is before him, and fills his eye, while he presses toward it evermore. Christ came into the world—to save sinners. Paul made every innocent compliance—that he might, by all means, save some. Mills determined—that he would savingly influence the world. Martin ran after—the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. Wesley girded himself for—a universal revival of religion. This, exactly this, is the genius of the minister for the times. Perhaps never were there greater allurements presented to the minds of ministers, to tempt them to a division of affection and pursuit. Abundant libraries—attractive lectures—literary and theological discussions—ingenious theories—fascinating circles—honourable appointments—flattering commendations—these, and the like, combined with native downward tendencies, are far too prone to cloud the spiritual

vision, and induce the minister to forget the one great purpose of his mission. There is wanting now a race of ministers of singleness of soul—of one, indomitable purpose,—living and running for salvation only;—in whose minds all else, whether in the literary, social, or physical world, is as the dust of the balance. *This is the greatest want of the world.* Greater talents are not needed. Learning, there is an abundance of it. Theologians—writers—scholars, are not lacking. A *concentration* is demanded, of energies already in the ministry, to the one great pursuit—the salvation of the race.

Man of God, what now! A sinner is about to perish forever. Christ has found a ransom. He commissions you to publish it to that sinner, that he may be saved. Shall anything hinder? Shall aught else come into mind?

VIII.

“Established in the faith.”—Col. ii, 7.

THE minister for the times is a *believing* man. He believes God. He believes God speaking through the prophets of olden time. He receives the witness that was thus given to the coming Messiah. He believes Christ speaking personally in the gospel message, and by inspiration through his apostles. He receives the Bible, and the whole Bible; undertaking not to prescribe what God ought to say, but to understand what he has said, and then

to believe. The great central truth of revelation—*Christ crucified*—is full in his eye. Here he looks and believes, while he wonders and triumphs. All other essential faith follows of course; for this great truth, as it were the sun of the universe, illuminates all else that God hath spoken. In the splendour of its rays, it is easy to see and believe the doctrine of the Godhead—that of the fall and inherent corruption of man—of repentance—of pardon by faith—of regeneration, and entire holiness by the Spirit's baptism—of a coming judgment, followed by eternal life and glory to the believer, and final and irretrievable ruin to the neglecter of the great salvation. Such is the sublime system of truth believed firmly by the minister I am describing. And not only is it pictured, in vivid colours, upon his mind,—it is written, as with the point of a diamond, upon his heart, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. His faith makes the things believed to be great and divine realities. It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It mightily influences his whole character, spirit, and conduct. He believes, and therefore speaks—acts. “He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*,” is his thorough persuasion; and, believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. “He gave himself a ransom for all,” is also his thorough persuasion, and he flies to bring all the world to the feet of Jesus—to remission, and sanctification, and salvation. He not only reads and hears of a judgment to come, but he sees it.

The trump of God—the mighty angels—the great white throne—the Son of man in his glory—the far-reaching multitude—the strange separation—the all-eventful sentences of welcome and rejection—these rise on his vision, not as poetry or dreams, but as grave realities; and knowing the terrors of the Lord, he persuades men. Hell, with him, is no fiction. The devil and his angels—the undying curse—the torment—the utter despair—the pit,—these he contemplates, and warns the sinner to flee from the wrath to come. Heaven—its mansions of rest—its river of life—its tree of immortality—its robes of white—its forms of beauty—its crowns of honour—its songs of glory—its angelic society—its sinless, tearless, endless happiness;—these, all these, though not seen, are yet “substance” to this minister. Living as in eternity, sure prospects are before him, through Christ, such as are most astonishing;—prospects of a destiny more enchanting by far than have ever “sages told or poets sung.”

We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

IX.

"*Be sober.*"—2 Thess. v, 6.

THE minister for the times is a *sober* man. He is sober in spirit, and always sober. Not that he never smiles ;—not that he is gloomy, and without cheerfulness ;—not that he possesses not one of the gladdest hearts among men. But he never trifles ;—his thoughts are serious—his mind is grave. His meditations are not occupied with empty and frivolous topics. They habitually linger rather with great and weighty themes.

He is sober in conversation. Not that he is forbidding, or dull, or heavy. He may be inferior to none in vivacity, ease, and attractiveness ; but he is not volatile—he does not jest. His words are not very many ; but they are well chosen, graceful, gracious, and uttered with cheerful seriousness. His conversation never does harm—its influence is always salutary.

He is sober in his general aspect and manners. He never flirts. He does not hurry nor worry. He is not greatly agitated or disturbed. He avoids eccentricities and oddities. He is ever found the same serious, solid character.

He is sober in the sanctuary—he is sober in devotion—God is there ; sober in sentiment, he avoids every untenable theory, every unscriptural or vain speculation ; sober in manner, he speaks neither too long nor too loud. He indulges no gesture

unsuitable to the pulpit, or incongruous with his theme.

This minister is sober. How, otherwise, could he pray, and praise, and rejoice evermore? How could he travel amid the great truths of revelation? How could he qualify himself to preach? How could he watch for souls, and save his people?

“He that negotiates between God and man,
As God’s ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness.”

X.

“*Sorrowful*.”—2 Cor. viii, 10.

THE minister for the times is a *sorrowful* man. Nor is this a new thing. It was thus with holy ones of old. David’s sorrow was continually before him as he contemplated the enemies of righteousness; while rivers of waters ran down his eyes because men kept not God’s law. Jeremiah desired to be, day and night, dissolved in tears for the wickedness of the people. It was in sorrow and in suffering that Christ redeemed the world. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Exceeding sorrowful was his soul, even unto death. His disciples, too, were to weep, and lament, and be sorrowful, while the world would rejoice. Paul had continual sorrow of heart because of his Jewish brethren, and was in afflictions and distresses “often.”

So the man who is the minister for these times. He will not look abroad upon the multifarious forms of sin without weeping. He will see God dishonoured here and there, and he will mourn. While beholding infinite riches of grace laid at the sinner's feet, and rejected by that sinner, his heart will burst. Contemplating vast multitudes tending straight toward ruin, he will weep and cry in secret places. Hanging over the congregation with the gospel message, it will be often as a mourner that so few take hold of the path of life.

He sorrows also for himself. Alas! how much of the past has been squandered! How many golden days are lost forever! How sad his felt deficiencies this moment! He weeps for himself—weeps for the world. He is, in a sense, a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. He is abroad in a sinful, stormy world—a revolted province of the King of kings. Rebellion is rife—righteousness is prostrate—an eternal enemy riots and triumphs, and leads captive at his will. The voice of warning is met with the delusive cry of peace and safety. Blindness and darkness cover the earth, while the sure prospect seems to be that millions must perish forever. The minister is sorrowful. At times a deep and awful amazement seizes him. He looks up, and sighs, and cries for the salvation of God. “Drop down, ye heavens, from above,” he sighs, “and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together.”

XI.

“Always rejoicing.”—2 Cor. vi, 10.

THE minister for the times is a *rejoicing* man. It is not all sorrow with him;—it is *never* sorrow, so as to exclude joy and rejoicing. He weeps over the prevalence of sin, and the wretchedness, present and eternal, following in its train. Yet he is a believing, a sanctified man. He has peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The peace which passeth understanding is his. The life of God is in his soul. His sins past are hidden—his name is written in heaven. He loves Christ perfectly, with the glorious assurance that Christ loves him. The mystery of salvation perpetually astonishes his mind, and ravishes his heart. The cross allures, and charms his soul forever. Such is his vision of the grace of Christ, that all things else grow dim to his eye. He counts all as loss for the excellency. All language is beggarly to express the glory he contemplates. The natural eye hath not seen it; to the unsanctified mind it has never occurred; but to him the Spirit of God has revealed it. The heirs of heaven are scattered here and there; while upward, amid the multitude, shoot the songs of the redeemed, rising on the ear of God. The Sabbath is there, and the sanctuary is open, whither he walks in company with the excellent of the earth—those dearest to him, dearest to heaven. The Scriptures are opened to him more and more, sanctifying him

more and more deeply ; dispelling the mists along his pathway, as he hastens to the bright morning of immortality. Meanwhile, a sinner repents on the right hand or on the left, and, though earth is silent, he must needs sympathize with the joy of angels ; and, trusting the sweet visions of prophecy, he sees a great company coming up from many dark nations, to be given for an inheritance to Christ. Then why should not his eye turn often away toward the hills of life ? There is his treasure—there is his heart—there his home. He approaches the New Jerusalem. Already soft breathings, at times, from those sacred regions, seem wafted to meet him ; while voices thence, dearer than all below, whisper along the air, “ We wait thy coming.” Out of dark sorrows and afflictions here, is about to emerge, as from some cold eclipse, a sunshine of supernal radiance and immortal beauty—a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Always rejoicing, then, always praising, onward this minister passes. A thousand worldly, guilty eyes pursue him, wondering at his blessedness ; while backward on their hearts rolls the stern conviction that he has a joy beyond their own, as the heavens are above the earth.

The minister for the times is a rejoicing man. Write it, ye heralds of Jesus ! Ye behove to fly on your heavenly errand with sprightly, joyous wing ; and those trumpet notes with which ye summon a slumbering world to life, should be glad and brilliant, as though an angel sounded.

XII.

"*I run.*"—1 Cor. ix, 26.

THE minister for the times is an *earnest* man. He has a great zeal for God. He has fixed his eye upon the most extensive salvation possible. The Spirit of the Lord is upon him; and under the influence of this baptism, in union with deep and protracted ponderings amid the Holy Scriptures, his soul is enkindled—his heart has grown "warm with holy fire." He is awake, and erect, and glowing, and flashing. He feels a strong and divine impulse urging him forward and upward. He is ready to run through a troop, and leap over a wall. He is girded to chase a thousand. He runs a race; and the past is forgotten, and the goal is before him, and he presses toward the mark. The general movements of this man are spirited, and strong, and definite. His step is firm and elastic. His motion is quick. His countenance is erect and direct. His eye is steady, his voice is decided. He is not an ordinary man, for he strikes for a great object—one that takes up and absorbs his being; and how is he straitened till it be accomplished! He has caught the spirit of the era through which he is passing. The world is in earnest. Myriads of spindles fly at every waterfall. Commerce mantles the ocean. Moving villages are rushing in every direction through the country. Companies, bearing their habitations with them, are hastening to the uttermost parts of the earth to search for gold. The

mysteries of Science are unfolding daily before the untiring zeal of her devotees. All is in motion—all is in earnest. The true minister sympathizes. Elijah girds up his loins and runs with Ahab;—ay, outstrips him even. But the “hand of the Lord” is upon him.

XIII.

“*Be still.*”—Psa. xlv. 10.

THE minister for the times is a *quiet* man. Quiet is he, not as opposed to the fervency and fire just delineated—not as opposed to all holy movement. But he is quiet instead of all graceless hurry;—instead of all that is bustle merely;—instead of all running where God leads not;—instead of all fear that hath torment;—instead of all distrust in the ever faithful God. He is quiet as Noah, when, in good earnest, he prepared for the coming storm;—quiet as Abraham, when, believing God, he journeyed to Moriah to make the mysterious offering;—quiet as Joseph, waiting in the Egyptian prison-house;—quiet as Moses, when, with the flood before them, and the hostile hosts behind them, he cried out to the Israelites, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God!”—quiet as David, when he not only hoped, but “quietly waited;”—quiet as Paul and Silas in their midnight worship in the inner prison;—quiet, I say, as Paul, when, with his eye full upon coming bonds and afflictions, he exclaim-

ed, "None of these things move me;" or, when the axe of martyrdom was brought in, he writes, "I am ready."

The minister for the times has the quietness which is one of the direct and beautiful progeny of faith. He that believeth shall not make haste—he entereth into rest. It is the quiet of the eagle's wing,—a wing of movement mighty, yet gentle and noiseless as the pendulum's vibrations. Thus onward he moves, equable and peaceful, amid the roughnesses of the minister's career. Enemies may arise, labours multiply, difficulties thicken, error stalk abroad, persecutions rage, and dungeons open; yet he abideth under the shadow of the Almighty, and is quiet from the fear of evil.

XIV.

"In much patience."—2 Cor. vi, 4.

THE minister for the times is a *patient* man. There are evil-doers;—he frets not because of them. There are deep sufferings peculiar to the minister;—he endures them without murmuring, and is patient in tribulation. The servant first acts, and then is rewarded;—he is patient that, after he has done the will of God, he may receive the promise. A great cloud of witnesses hang over him, as he strives for heaven;—he runs the race with patience. The Lord is coming;—he is patient with the long patience of the husbandman, knowing that the day is

nigh. He patiently studies the Holy Scriptures; for no otherwise can he expect to bring thence new things and old. He patiently waits for a fuller manifestation of things which are now wholly or partially mysterious, not doubting that all will be plain in due time. He patiently instructs the people; knowing that line upon line, and precept upon precept, are needful to their edification and salvation. He patiently visits his flock, remembering the apostolic example of going from house to house, as well as of teaching in the temple. He bears up under diversified complaints—against all calumny and persecution—against the loss of all things; being assured that Jesus smiles upon him, and that all shall be well in the end. Storms fall upon him, and beat hard against him; a horror of thick darkness overshadows him; his familiar friend lifts up his heel against him; he bows, and suffers, and waits, not doubting that these heavings and dashings are lifting him upward to where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest. Meanwhile, is any earthly suffering too long, or too heavy to be borne, for the welfare of those for whom Christ died?

XV.

"Clothed with humility."—1 Pet. v, 5.

THE minister for the times is an *humble* man. The native and active corruption of his heart has been portrayed to his eye. He has counted a few of his transgressions. He has known and pondered himself. The result is, that he has deliberately placed himself at the last end of the race. "Less than the least of all saints," and "chief of sinners," are formulas which he feelingly understands and unfeignedly applies. Hence there is no saint, however lowly, poor, or neglected, to whom he would not count it an honour to administer. There is no work pertaining to Christ's ministry to which he considers himself superior. There is no place, no neighbourhood, where he would not reckon it a privilege to publish Christ's gospel. No preference of others to himself disturbs him; for, in his estimation, all are better than he. No obscurity of position distresses him; for *any* opportunity to serve Christ, he feels to be more than he deserves. To the honours, distinctions, as well as to the hopes of this world, he has become crucified. He walks in a lowly vale, and lingers at the feet of Jesus. He has given his reputation to God, submitting to be as the filth and offscouring of all things, and consenting that his name should be cast out as evil. Pride is hidden from his heart. He is humble, and God gives him grace, while he knows the proud

afar off. He is one of the “contrite ones;” and He who inhabiteth eternity—dwells in the high and holy place—dwells with him, to revive his spirit and his heart. This man asks not what the world approves or disapproves—what it honours or despises; but what God wills—where duty calls—what the world demands. He serves the Lord with all humility of mind. He walks humbly with his God.

XVI.

“*Wise as serpents.*”—Matt. x, 16.

THE minister for the times is a *wise* man. We mean that he strikes for a noble end, and is skilful in the choice of means for its accomplishment. His end, as we have seen, is the salvation of men. His efforts are correspondent and appropriate. He preaches;—preaches the truth of God;—preaches extensively and faithfully. With an eagle eye he watches the effect of his preaching, marking the first favourable impression, and aiming to deepen it and render it effectual. He goes from house to house. His gracious conversation follows hard after his sermons. He utters few words other than what tend to salvation. He enters the circle of prayer and sacred conference, and on the wings of holy devotion, he strives to bear all the company away to God. He flies to the weak, the doubting, the tempted, and lifts them up in the name of the Lord, and puts the adversary to flight. He reproves, re-

bukes, exhorts, and exerts himself in whatever may conduce to the progress of evangelical reformation. He abides in the Spirit, and labours incessantly to bring all others to the same position.

And while thus operating strongly—reaching forth to touch every active means for promoting salvation, it is with the mind and spirit of the Lord Jesus. There is no pride—no obtrusiveness—no ostentation—no unnecessary noise or clamour. He asks for no sounding of trumpets before him. He comes not with a rod, to drive men into the kingdom of God. He would win them rather, and by every prudent means, and every wise and Scriptural manner. He is not too rigid to bend, except from the line of righteousness and truth. He will cheerfully embrace every innocent conformity to different tastes and varying temperaments. He will thus adapt himself to Jew or Greek—high or low—learned or unlearned—aged or young—one or another name. He will become all things to all men, that he may by all means save some. His object is the greatest, the sublimest in human thought. His unceasing study is to accomplish it; and the devoted student of Jesus fails not to become eminently wise in the things pertaining to the salvation of the race.

XVII.

"Harmless as doves."—Matt. x, 16.

THE minister for the times is a *gentle* man. This servant of the Lord is no striker. He does not strive, but is gentle to all men of every class and description. There is no anger, wrath, blasphemy, but the peace of God rules. There is the wisdom which is pure and gentle. There is the gentleness which is as that of the nurse, as she cherishes her children. There is the soft answer that turneth away wrath. There is the soft manner which never needlessly offends. Gentleness here goes hand in hand with earnestness. There is fiery zeal, yet never overleaping the bounds of truth, propriety, and decorum ;—a mighty and undying fervency, yet ever accompanied by a gentleness mild and beautiful as when the soft sunbeam plays along the swelling billow. I have known a man that prayed as though he spake with God face to face, and preached as though he had just alighted from eternity to deliver that sermon, and retire again forever at its close ; and spake to his fellow-men, as he met them, as though he were some heavenly being sent to whisper to them of eternal realities ; and hasted from place to place, and from church to church, as though he were the angel of the apocalypse flying with the everlasting gospel to preach ; and yet, with all his unearthly fervour and devotion, with all his flaming, burning zeal, his, too, were the mild-

ness and gentleness of the unweaned lamb. He was a flaming fire, and yet he was a bland and lovely light, the rays whereof were soft and delicious as the outbeamings from celestial forms. He was a mighty man of God, and yet he was a little child, and his accents were those of tenderness, simplicity, and love. As he warned the multitudes that flocked to his preaching, it was with a solemnity and awfulness of countenance, as if before that countenance were rising, in open vision, the dread realities to which he pointed the anxious hearer. And yet those features knew how to relax into the smile of friendship, or to be moistened by the tear of sympathy and affection. So with the minister who is adapted to this present age. He is destined to see much whose tendency is to disturb. He will meet a thousand unreasonable and wicked men. A multitude of disciples, worldly, weak, faltering, and erring, will pass before him. Divers provocations will assail him on the right hand and on the left. Full many a strong sermon, and solemn warning, and mighty exhortation, and tender entreaty, will seem to be as if "wasted on the desert air." Yet, amid all, he will move softly;—he will possess his soul in patience and in gentleness. He will more often weep than scold;—he will beckon rather than drive;—he will entreat rather than chastise.

With gentleness he combines meekness. His eye is upon the conspicuous and beautiful example of Christ and the apostles. Reviled, he reviles not again. If hunted as a partridge upon the moun-

tains, he is peaceful toward his enemies. Smitten upon one cheek, he turns the other also. Injured and oppressed, he blesses his persecutors. Despitefully used, he prays for his vile adversaries. Defaming is recompensed with entreaty—reviling with blessing—hostility with hospitality—evil with good. Revenge is unknown with him. Every evil communication is dispensed with. The mind of Christ—the mind of meekness, forbearance, and long-suffering—is embraced and exemplified.

XVIII.

“Be not afraid, but speak.”—Acts xviii, 9.

THE minister for the times is a *fearless* man. He is not dismayed at the faces of men. He girds himself to go where God calls, and to speak what God commands. Infinite grace has made him a defended city—an iron pillar and brazen walls, against all that do wickedly. He is not afraid of evil men, nor of their words, nor dismayed at their looks, though briers and thorns be with him, and though he dwell among scorpions. He fears not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. If Peter and John are forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, they hearken to God rather than to men; while, with all boldness, they speak his word. Paul speaks boldly, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God; and if chains are clanking, and fires are burning,

he is ready not to be bound only, but also to suffer death for the name of the Lord Jesus. His glory is, that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it were by life or by death.

The faithful and fearless minister of the gospel runs not uncalled into danger. He exposes not himself without necessity to the insults or displeasure of the enemies of God. But these insults—this displeasure—frighten him never from the line of usefulness and duty. He has died to the world. He has resigned his reputation to Christ, and submitted to be a fool for his sake. He is moved by lofty contemplations and views, and knows himself to be enlisted in the ranks of righteousness and truth. He knows that God is infinitely good and gracious; while man is vile, and his face straight towards death and ruin. He knows there is a great salvation, by which the race might be actually redeemed and blessed forever. He knows that all the affairs of earth are nothing in comparison with this. He knows that all men, without exception of age, rank, station, or capacity, should at once lay hold of life; and that to bring all up to the heavenly glory, is, under God, the great work of the Church on earth.

Fear, under such circumstances, is utterly misplaced. The true minister is a soldier. He buckles on the harness, and braces up his heart, and puts on strength, and wars a good warfare. He opens his mouth wherever it is proper, and speaks boldly, as he ought to speak, the great things of God and

salvation. He keeps back nothing that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God, regarding not the smiles or the frowns of men, but “looking unto Jesus,” and to the sublime work he came to earth to accomplish.

XIX.

“*Ye were dear.*”—1 Thess. ii, 8.

THE minister for the times is an *affectionate* man. He loves his neighbour as himself; that is, he loves his fellow-men with a love that is great, and constant, and earnest, and practical. It is the love, not of a natural man, but of a minister of the Lord Jesus. It is kindred to the love that impelled Jesus to this world, and impelled him to the cross, and that impels his unceasing intercessions in the Holy of Holies. It is identical with that apostolic love which flowed forth, a stream divine, upon all the world. We read of a love seeking not its own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved;—a love that suffereth long and is kind—that behaveth not itself unseemly—is not easily provoked—thinketh no evil—beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all things. There is a love that courts the largest, deepest earthly sacrifices, if man shall thereby be benefited and redeemed. There was a man, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, who could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren—his kinsmen according to the flesh;—

who counted not his life dear unto him that he might compass man's eternal weal;—who, year after year, ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears;—who coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel;—who sought not theirs, but sought themselves;—who was “affectionately desirous” of the people, not for himself, but for them;—who was willing to impart unto them not the gospel only, but his own soul, because they were dear unto him;—who exhorted, and comforted, and charged, as a father, his children;—who very gladly spent all, for the rescue and happiness of lost men.

This is the love we mean. This is the love which is born of God's Holy Spirit, and lives only in a gracious heart. It is the appropriate love glowing in that minister who is specially adapted to these eventful times. He has a love bearing him above all sordid considerations—all human and puny distinctions—all opposition—all discouragements and weariness;—a love that forever asks, “What shall I do that I may bless mankind?”—a love that wakes early and late—that is planning and contriving evermore—that seizes upon all rational expedients—that forgets all neglect and injury—that asks not whether it shall be reciprocated, but whether it can bless—that swells with emotions unutterable for a world's immortal happiness—that weeps often in secret places—that yearns over the race with infinite longing—that triumphs, as with an angel's joy, when a sinner repents—that is ever

rejoicing with them who rejoice, and weeping with them that weep—that glows and burns incessantly ; —a love that is strong as death—a flame most vehement, which many waters cannot quench, nor many floods can drown.

This man passes swiftly on his strong career, for his flight is by love's resistless impulsion. His wing never falters, for it moves by an interior, unearthly agency, "working mightily." That voice—O! how beautiful are its notes! for a living coal, lifted by celestial hands from Heaven's altar, hath touched his lips.

XX.

"*With all purity.*"—1 Tim. v, 2.

THE minister for the times is a *pure* man. He has sought and obtained the cleansing grace of Christ. Confessing his sins, God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins, and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness. His heart has become the habitation of the Spirit. God dwells with him and in him, ever creating him anew, and transforming him after the image of the heavenly. By infinite grace all carnal affections die in him, and all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in him. He is a garden sealed. He turns away his eye from beholding vanity, and is deaf to the fascinating song of sin. He tastes not—handles not—touches not. He leans each moment upon boundless grace, to

avert from him every whisper, every breath of corruption. With all his might he flies after God, and after good. He gives place to evil—no, not for a moment; while he solicits to his mind all beautiful and holy associations. His heart is pre-occupied with whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. On these he thinks. These are the themes of his meditations when he rises at early morning—when he acts, studies, converses. All day long, and upon his couch in the night-watches, he is still with Christ. He is ever walking and conversing with Him who is infinite purity and excellence; while every day witnesses in him a nearer assimilation to the Holy One. Thus he “sees God;”—sees him in air, earth, and sky;—sees him in all the Scriptures;—sees him in every providential event, whether great or small, whether joyous or sad. Moving hither and thither among men, he breathes a sacred influence on all, and his savour is that of righteousness and goodness.

XXI.

“*A good conscience.*—1 Pet. iii, 16.

THE minister for the times is a *conscientious* man. In his profound and protracted study of the Holy Scriptures, he has come to possess elevated views of Christian and ministerial obligations. On the one hand, he has pondered the estate of man, fallen and sinful, with eternal ruin in prospect. On

the other hand, he has discerned the grace of God through Christ, as being fully commensurate with man's disaster, and a perfect antidote, if received, to his woful calamity. Then, again, he has contemplated himself as commissioned to stand between the living and the dead, to proclaim authoritatively the proffered mercy of God to the rebellious race, and, by every appropriate means, to urge their compliance with the conditions of pardon and everlasting life. He has perceived that much, very much, is depending upon his diligence and fidelity in this sublime work. He is aware that every step of his is influential either for weal or for wo. He is set for the rise or fall of many. He beholds the salvation of his fellow-men committed, in a very serious sense, to his hands ;—that on his faithfulness or neglect hangs the salvation or ruin of many a precious soul. The Holy Spirit has baptized his conscience. He not only sees his duty, but is mightily drawn to its accomplishment. Every sin, of every kind and degree, is of awful magnitude in his eye ; and, should temptation urge, his response is, "How can I do this great thing and sin against God?" Christ is his all ;—how can he suffer the least cloud to hang between him and his Saviour's countenance? How can he bear to lie down at night, reflecting, as he presses his pillow, upon time misspent, souls neglected, duties omitted? As he passes onward through time, and approaches, each moment, the judgment-seat, how can he bear that any good remain unaccomplished

which he might have possibly secured? He aims thus to live in all good conscience before God. He exercises himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; and as his rejoicing, he would have the testimony of his conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity—not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God—he has his conversation in the world.

XXII.

“Hid with Christ.”—Col. iii, 3.

THE minister for the times is a *hidden* man. He is God's, and God is his hiding-place. How is the minister to go out amid the frowns, insults, dangers, and fiery trials incident to a faithful herald of the cross? Goes he forth all exposed and unprotected? No! Christ is with him alway, even to the end of the world. Walls of fire are around him—a canopy of love is over him. Though invisible to a worldly eye, yet the chariots of God fill all the mountain round about Elisha. The true minister's shield is God. His tower, his rock, his stronghold, is the Holy One of Israel. His dwelling is the secret place of the Most High—his abode is beneath the shadow of the Almighty. The wings of God cover him, and his refuge and his fortress are there. The terror of night, the arrow, the pestilence, the wasting destruction, have no alarms for him. The ruin on the right hand and on the

left comes not near him. Angels have him in charge, and keep him as he goes. He is hidden from the fascinations of the world and of sense, for he is ingrafted into Christ. He is a branch of the heavenly stem, and a partaker of the divine nature. He is hidden with the Saviour, and the glory of the divine and spiritual life engrosses all his affections. He outrides every storm, for the anchor of his soul is away within the veil. "He has renounced self, and naturally seeks a low place, remote from public observation, and unreached by human applause. When he is silent to human hearing, he is conversing with God; and when he opens his lips and speaks, it is the message which God gives, and is spoken with the demonstration of the Spirit. When he is apparently inactive, he is gaining strength from the divine fountain—drinking nourishment into the inmost soul; and when he moves, although with quiet step, the heart of the multitude is shaken and troubled at his approach, because God moves with him."*

XXIII.

"Compassed about with—witnesses."—Heb. xii, 1.

THE minister for the times is a *conspicuous* man. Though hidden with Christ, and feeding upon hidden manna, and partaking of joys which this world knows not of, he is yet a public man. He is a

* Professor Upham.

spectacle to the world. He is no hermit or recluse, and withdraws not himself from the walks of men. No man is more seen—no voice is more familiar. He stands aloft, and a thousand eyes are upon him, and his trumpet is with him, and its notes are clear and constant. His position and bearing are known and read of all men. He is not seen in every assembly. He is never, without necessity, in the crowd. Yet, in whatever gathering Christ is to be honoured—pure morality is to be advanced—a soul is to be saved—there is this minister. He is a commissioned man—an officer of the Lord of hosts—a captain in Israel. He is constantly in the field, and is the earliest and strongest to fall upon the enemies of righteousness and heaven. He is the shining mark against which the arch adversary of men aims his most fiery—his sharpest, deadliest darts. He is ever flying hither and thither, rousing and encouraging the ranks of God;—leading them on with rejoicing valour to charge the strongholds of Satan and his angels. Witnesses, not from beneath only, but from worlds unseen, are marking his lofty career. Spirits saved, bending from their spheres of light, behold him; and angel beings, in shining ranks innumerable, compassing him afar, watch him as he runs the race for life eternal. Many, especially among the good and humble of this world, are acquainted with his name;—a name which is often mentioned in the heavenly circles, and is written in the book of life. In far-off ages, and when the judgment-day shall have long since

passed, this man will be conspicuous in heaven ;—conspicuous as the brightness of the firmament,—resplendent and beautiful as the stars forever and ever.

XXIV.

“Enter into thy closet.”—Matt. vi, 6.

THE minister for the times is a *solitary* man. He is much and often alone. He seeks long, solitary sittings with the Holy Scriptures ; and in stillness and thoughtfulness labours to inform his understanding, and impress and sanctify his heart, with the sacred truths of revelation. He communes in solitude with the righteous dead, and listens to their solemn voices, and thinks over what they once thought, and feels again what they once felt, and kindles with the fire that was wont to glow in spirits singing now in paradise.

He loves, too, to commune with his own heart ; and, when every human eye and ear are absent, then to converse with himself alone—then to make solemn inquiry whether all be well—whether sin is dead, and faith, and hope, and love are living ;—whether flesh is crucified, and all the Christian virtues are blooming and flourishing ;—whether Satan is cast out, and Christ is formed within, the hope of glory ;—whether this world is relinquished, and the spirit is longing for God and heaven ;—whether all possible efforts are put forth to save the world.

He loves especially to be alone with God, and pray to his "Father who is in secret." There he tells him all, unfolding his whole heart to the great Searcher. He confesses—repents—supplicates—intercedes—weeps. He pours forth his soul in a thousand strains of holy devotion. He strives after the excellent glory. Laying hold of unearthly strength, God meets him, and talks with him, as with Ezekiel in the field. He blesses him as Jacob, when, being left alone, the patriarch had power with God, and prevailed. He manifests himself as to Peter, when, by himself, he prayed upon the housetop. He touches him as Daniel when he made supplication, and the angel flew swiftly. He is prepared for new victories. He is adorned with salvation, and rewarded openly.

XXV.

"In conversation."—1 Tim. iv, 12.

THE minister for the times is a *social* man. He is much alone, and yet is much in company. He is not seen in every circle. He seeks not conversation merely that he may pass pleasantly a leisure hour. It is not simply relaxation and enjoyment that is coveted; but he throws himself amid society in order to prosecute still the great end from which his eye never, never wanders. He contemplates all men as travellers to a destiny of infinite importance

—a destiny which his own influence is to modify and exalt to the utmost. He has contemplated, too, the wonderful power of speech; and that not only in the studied address, but in the more familiar aspect of the social circle. He has learned that careless men are sometimes “won by the conversation” of righteous companions and friends; while the Bible has taught him of a species of words that “minister grace to the hearers.” This is enough with a man, the passion of whose soul is to save the lost, and lure them to eternal life. He converses largely and faithfully. They are mostly gracious words that proceed out of his mouth. The topics that are wont to engross the conversation of most men, are, in the comparison, lightly esteemed by him. The great themes of the Bible are those on which he mainly expatiates; aiming, by direct remark, or by attractive allusion or illustration, to press upon the attention the things of God. He cultivates an abundant facility of bending worldly conversation heavenward. He aims that Jesus should enter and stand in the midst, though the “doors were shut;” or, if there be companies where his Saviour may not be admitted, he speedily retires. Why should the minister—one of the watchmen of these solemn times—parley with the things that have an end? What conversation, what word has he, except for Christ and heaven? Are not thousands listening to his conversation—marking, scrutinizing the tenor of all he says? Knows he not that, by his use of the social talent, he will

be judged by multitudes?—and that, by this, every one that knows him will be quickened or hindered in respect to the most important of all interests? Is he ignorant that the power of his preaching is mysteriously enhanced or prejudiced by his good or ill conversation? All this is plain. Hence, he converses much, and converses evangelically. As necessity may be, he instructs, or warns, or reproves, or encourages, or exhorts, with all long-suffering and doctrine.

He converses impartially, forgetting not the poor, the aged, and infirm—even the evil and unthankful. He neglects not the remote, but flies where they are, bearing the divine message.

He converses constantly. Few days pass over him in which he does not breathe a heavenly savour by his conversation. From house to house he passes as an angel of goodness, bearing ever the sweet burden of his spirit—the salvation of the lost; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

He converses judiciously and timely, studying earnestly the selectest modes and opportunities for impressing sacred and saving truths upon the heart. When mourning and bereavements come—when riches take wings—when awful Providence enshrouds this world in gloom, and shuts away its hopes forever,—in such times especially will be heard the whisperings of the man of God, pointing to a better and more enduring substance.

He converses modestly and carefully, and, as often as may be, “privately;” adapting himself to the

prejudices, ages, stations, or infirmities, of the varied multitude.

He converses benevolently and affectionately ; for he loves the sinner—loves his eternal good ; while his whole aspect and every word bespeak a soul overflowing with profound affection and good-will toward the souls of men.

And yet he converses faithfully and earnestly. His eye is upon success. He longs to compass his end, namely, *a saving influence*. He wants the soul for heaven—to place him a star in the Redeemer's crown ;—to see him saved from hell ;—to listen to his harp in the New Jerusalem.

XXVI.

"A good report."—1 Tim. iii, 7.

THE minister for the times is a *reputable* man. It is meant that, so far as known, he is known favourably. No stain whatever attaches itself to his character. He is a blameless person—a son of God without rebuke in a crooked and perverse generation. No one has reasonably any evil thing to say of him. No fatal abatement enters to nullify or prejudice the holy influence which Heaven designs him to exert. His is a fair and unsullied name, linking with itself all pure and hallowed associations. In whatever Christian circle that name is mentioned, it is with profound respect and appro-

val. It is emphatically a "good name," that is preferable to great riches, and is better than precious ointment. To the good, such a man is ever welcome; to the evil and unbelieving, he is a living argument in favour of pure and undefiled religion. His unspotted character gives him influence wherever he moves, and would stand instead of many a merely intellectual accomplishment. All serious people are ready to listen to his instruction, his exhortations, and persuasions; and he goes in and out before them a good man, without spot, unrebukable, and blameless.

XXVII.

"Given to hospitality."—1 Tim. iii, 2.

THE minister for the times is a *hospitable* man. His earthly mansion is not a splendid one. He dwells not in a palace, for he is not a rich man. Yet his humble abode is open, and his table is spread for the necessity of saints. The stranger does not lodge in the street, nor are the doors closed to the traveller. He deals bread to the hungry, and brings the poor that are cast out to his house. He is not forgetful to entertain strangers; for it is remembered that thus some, as Abraham and Lot, have entertained angels unawares. The "little chamber" is provided; and the bed, the table, the stool, and the candlestick, are ready for the man of God when

he turns in thither. He remembers the good Obadiah, who hid a hundred prophets from the wicked Jezebel, and fed them with bread and water; and Martha, who received Jesus into her house; and Aquila and Priscilla, who entertained Apollos, and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly; and Lydia, who constrained Paul and Timothy, if they judged her faithful, to abide in her house. This minister counts it not a misfortune to be called to entertain a stranger. There is a clearer vision. He recognises a providential hand in this apparent interruption, and sets himself to watch narrowly the good that is to ensue, either as accruing to himself, or to the stranger. Often he goes abroad to find objects on whom his blessing may rest. Now one has entered his door, and sits down at his table. What "excellent gift" does the God of providence design him to impart to this stranger? What special counsel, encouragement, instruction, sympathy, does he need—and which, if it may be afforded him, shall prove a blessing never to be forgotten, and never to die? or what may be the gem which this stranger is to leave behind him? What sentence, what word, will he utter, that will be a seed of mighty growth, whose harvest shall be the joy of millions? Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

XXVIII.

"Temperate in all things."—1 Cor. ix, 25.

THE minister for the times is a *temperate* man. Such is he who strives for the mastery in worldly contests. Such is the one who strives for excellence in the most sacred and elevated calling among men. He is temperate in meats and drinks, and has no partiality for sumptuous fare. Eating and drinking are held, with him, as very subordinate matters. He eats to live; hence he asks for plain food, and that in sufficient quantities only. He would preserve his body sound and vigorous; and that, too, as a duty not to himself only, but to the Church and to God. He desires not, dares not, for a momentary gratification, to impair, in the smallest degree, the complete strength, activity, and elasticity of the physical man; nor does he dare, by intemperance in food or drinks, to diminish aught from his intellectual energy and fire. He cultivates a sound mind in a sound body. In the quality and quantity of his food he never forgets the intimate connexion between temperance in the bodily appetites, and the present and long-continued healthy action of the mind; nor does he forget the equally close, and equally important connexion between such temperance and the spirit of prayer and praise—the spirit of Christian zeal and holiness—the spirit of faith, hope, and charity—yea, every gracious quality. He looks steadily toward the full

and constant perfection of his powers, in order that he may deal the very heaviest blow against Satan and sin, and touch the farthest extremity of upward influence for which Providence had destined him. Contemplating a flight lofty, mighty, and protracted, he scorns that any fleshly and mean indulgence should, for one moment, cripple those wings, or retard that shining progress.

XXIX.

"The gift that is in thee."—1 Tim. iv, 14.

THE minister for the times is a *gifted* man. Not that he is necessarily one of those who are said to possess more than ordinary native abilities. Not that he is, in the technical sense, a great man. But it is meant that he is endowed with talents or gifts which, with the appropriate cultivation, are adapted to the great work of the gospel ministry. The God of nature has given him a mind possessing common sense—a common understanding. He is gifted with, at least, common powers of attention and memory. In the general, he is gifted with natural abilities competent, in their cultivated state, to exert a positive and strong influence upon his fellow-men. It is not necessary to suppose him a genius. Neither is he an ordinary man. There is *something* in him elevating him above the mass. He is not entirely common. He is not jejune or commonplace ;—not

weak, nor dull, nor tedious. There is that in him, be it more or less, which stands out from what is merely customary ;—a feature or features of the not merely good, but of the attractive, the useful, the noble. This age of strong excitement, and of unwonted activity, asks for ministers who, in the pulpit, in the more social worship, and in the usual walks of pastoral effort, evince positive excellencies ; and if their natural gifts are only such as are common, yet, at least, superior grace, acting upon these, and enkindling and vivifying them, leads them out into unusual and intense action, and thus advances their possessor to a position and character beyond what is merely ordinary. It is not sufficient for the minister of these times that he be as men in general. He must have and evince something more. In the good sense, he must be distinguished and marked ;—he requires to be an extraordinary man ;—a man who, without any native deficiency of intellect, has also acquired a correct and strong discipline, and varied and extensive learning ;—who has improved his powers to the utmost, and who still permits no day to pass without his realizing further progress and higher perfection.

XXX.

"All things—in order."—1 Cor. xiv, 40.

THE minister for the times is an *orderly* man. He is orderly in his person. His garb is neat and becoming, and his whole aspect is orderly, pure, and without offence. He is orderly in his closet devotions. These have their regular times, and those times are occupied accordingly. There he regularly offers his supplications, prayers, and thanksgivings. Himself—his family—his people—the poor—the distressed—the ignorant—the heathen—all are every day remembered in his prayers to heaven. He is orderly in his family religion. Every morning and evening all business in his house is suspended ;—the Bible is presented and read in order, brief and pertinent remarks are made, the song of praise, and the prayer of faith, ascend to God. He is orderly in his studies and investigations. His books and papers are in order. His plan of studying is settled. He undertakes deliberately ;—what is undertaken is prosecuted regularly and systematically, and finished promptly. His mind is orderly, and his thoughts duly arranged and simplified. The association of his thoughts is well regulated and pure. He is orderly in retiring, sleeping, rising, eating, drinking, and recreating. He is orderly in the performance of his pastoral duties—calling regularly upon the people without respect to persons, and giving prompt notice to every spe-

cial case requiring his attention. His aim is to have a time for everything, and to do everything in its time. He is orderly in his various appointments for preaching and expounding the Holy Scriptures, and in respect to all other meetings for promoting the cause of God. He is orderly and punctual in instructing the children, and in endeavouring to lead them in the way of life. All his business, so far as possible, is systematized. Each article has its place, and each work its hour. Nor yet is he a slave to his orderly plan of arrangements. Such a plan is always made subordinate to the great object of his efforts and his life. Hence there is no impatience at any necessary or unexpected interference with his usual order. All such interruptions are wont to be hailed, rather, as providential—from which he habituates himself to expect some special good, either to himself or to others. While aiming at perfect order in his efforts, he yet recognizes himself as the servant of all—ever ready to act for their happiness and salvation as the gracious Hand shall direct.

XXXI.

“*With thy might.*”—Eccles. x, 12.

THE minister for the times is an *industrious* man. His hours and moments are, in his eye, of more than golden value. In respect to time, he is rigidly parsimonious. He is systematic, as seen above; and

honours his system by a diligence which is untiring and intense. The Scriptural precept to gospel ministers is never forgotten or disregarded. Attendance is given to reading—to exhortation—to doctrine. He meditates upon these things—gives himself wholly to them. He preaches the word, and is instant in season, out of season. He makes full proof of his ministry. The Scripture examples to gospel ministers are also before his eye. Jesus is contemplated, as he went through all the cities and villages, teaching, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and every disease among the people. And it is not forgotten, that besides His recorded acts, there were many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, every one, even the world itself might be imagined incapable of containing the books which should be written.

He also thinks of the man who solemnly called upon the elders of Ephesus to remember that, by the space of three years, he ceased not to warn every man night and day with tears. He remembers the man who, from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum, fully preached the gospel of Christ. “In other words,” says one, “Paul, by preaching, evangelized Syria, Phenicia, Arabia, Cilicia, Pamphilia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Galatia, Pontus, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Troas, Caria, Lycia, Ionia, Lydia, Thrace, Macedonia, Thessalonica, and Achaia, besides the islands of Cyprus and Crete.

Or, of modern times, he remembers Calvin; of

body lean, worn, spent, and wearied, yet reading, every week of the year through, three divinity lectures; every other week, over and above, preaching every day, giving, as some reckon, one hundred and eighty-six lectures, and two hundred and eighty-six sermons annually; sitting, every Thursday, in the Presbytery; every Friday, explaining divers difficult texts to ministers; solving a thousand doubts and questions proposed to him by various churches as well as pastors; and, over and above all these employments, bringing out, almost every year, some great volume in folio, or other size; and still driving his prodigious industry into the very midst of his dying illness.

Or, he remembers Wesley, who, as an angel of mercy, flew in every direction through the United Kingdom, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ;—who studied, and laboured, and prayed, to an extent almost unparalleled in the history of man;—who continued his labours from the commencement of manhood, long after fourscore years had bleached to snowy whiteness his flowing locks;—who, for more than half a century, rose at four, preached two, three, and four times in a day, and travelled four thousand five hundred miles annually;—who, in addition to all his travels and preachings, wrote what would require an ordinary life to read;—and who, by his indomitable industry, joined to his great talents and sublime piety, exerted upon the destinies of mankind an influence far-reaching and incalculable.

Contemplating such lofty examples—the great work to be done—the few transient years that remain—the startling bearings of every pious effort, this good minister is never, never idle. Whatsoever his hand finds to do, he does it with his might.

XXXII.

“Be strong.”—1 Cor. xvi, 13.

THE minister for the times is a *strong* man ; that is, he is strong in God. He has the strength that accompanies a full perception of his native weakness and utter nothingness. It is the strength of unclouded faith. The man believes, and therefore speaks—therefore acts and labours with an energy and power which ordinary men never evince. Like Abraham, he is strong in faith, giving glory to God. Like Joshua, he is strong and of good courage in making war upon the enemies of righteousness. Like the Baptist, he is strong in spirit, and goes forth with a measure of the spirit and power of Elijah. Like Timothy, he is strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. This strength characterizes all his spirit and conduct. It imparts energy and decision to every movement and every thought. He is strong to feel ; for his heart is touched by the mighty Spirit of God. He is strong to pray ; for his prayers are not dull, and scattered, and inefficient, but there is offered up supplication with strong

crying and tears. He is strong to praise ; for his vision is clear, and the goodness and grace of Christ are seen to be vast as infinity. Strong is he to investigate the Scriptures ; for these have become the book of his life. He is strong to preach ; for it is counted the greatest privilege and honour to proclaim the salvation of Christ to perishing men. He is strong to converse ; for it is out of the abundance of his heart. He is strong to endure ; for he is pledged to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He is strong in suffering ; for all is received at God's hand—received as a portion of his earthly discipline, and God's grace is sufficient for him. He is strong to plan for the advancement of genuine religion and piety, and strong to urge such plans to full execution.

This minister is spiritually mighty. He may, at times, be shaken in respect to questions of human policy ; but, touching the great cardinal points of Christian doctrine and action, his mind never falters, never wavers. Planting himself immovably upon the Holy Scriptures, he stands fast as upon the eternal rock ; and the rains descend, and the floods rush, and the winds blow, while he emerges from the storm unscathed and unharmed.

XXXIII.

"A ready mind."—1 Pet. v, 2.

THE minister for the times is a *ready* man. While strong for every duty of the ministry, he is likewise ready. His mind being calm, subdued, humble, and happy, he is ready to meditate and to study. His affairs and movements being ordered by rigid system, there is a readiness for each effort as its appointed time arrives. If sudden emergencies arise, the power is secured of commanding and summoning his thoughts, and of directing his inquiries to the case in hand. Especially is he ever ready to engage in his appropriate work—that of preaching Christ. If opportunity offers, he is “ready to preach the gospel” wherever men will listen to the sound. Here rarely, if ever, is there backwardness, or any request to be excused. Great and weighty reasons press upon him, and forbid him to shrink from so divine a work. Great results often hang upon a single godly instruction, and he bewares how he withholds when it is in his power to communicate. By every suitable means, he is prompt to stand in defence of religion; for there is always a readiness to give a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear. He is undaunted by every prospective difficulty, persecution, and suffering; for he is ready not to be bound only, but also to suffer death for the name of the Lord Je-

sus ; and if that death be actually pending, he is ready to be offered.

Nothing is more certain than that these times require ministers who are awake and ready. They behoove to be men whose intellects are well furnished and strongly disciplined—men of elastic spirits and holy hearts—possessing a glad will and ready mind for the duties and conflicts of the minister of righteousness. Now is the time for the lingering, the tardy, the faint-hearted and reluctant to stand aside, and let there come up to fill the apostolic ranks a host of burnished soldiery, ready armed, and of ready step and perfect discipline, who shall be ever prompt to do battle for the Lord of Hosts.

XXXIV.

"Not yours, but you."—2 Cor. xii, 14.

THE minister for the times is a *disinterested* man. Here also he has the mind of Christ, whose love and efforts for the race of man were of a character the most perfectly disinterested. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet, for our sakes, became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. Such, too, was the spirit of the holy apostles, who, through great personal disadvantage and sacrifice, laboured for the happiness and eternal salvation of the nations ; who very gladly spent their substance, and

spent themselves, for others ; and that, too, though the more abundantly they loved others, the less they might be loved by them. So the apostolic minister of this present age labours, at whatever personal and temporal loss, to bring men to Christ, and to present them spotless before God with exceeding joy. He has resigned the idea of worldly prosperity and wealth. Preaching the gospel, he expects only *to live* of the gospel. He wishes and demands no more than what is necessary for a comfortable subsistence, so as, without distraction, to prosecute his untiring labours for the world's regeneration. He seeks not theirs, but them. If the conversion of his fellow-men breathes, as it does, a salutary influence upon his own happiness, it is not, however, any beautiful result like this that captivates his eye, and urges onward his strong endeavours. All other and subordinate considerations are lost in the longing of his heart for the holiness and happiness of men, and for the glory of God in their everlasting life. He knows, it is true, that a great reward of his faithful labours will, in the sequel, accrue to himself ; yet this thought, sublime and lovely though it be, is far from being the main-spring of his vehement activity. Love—burning, resistless love—love to Christ and to the souls he has purchased—this is the constraining principle—this is the fountain whence every refreshing stream pours forth ; here is the quenchless fire whence every warming, gladdening influence is ever radiating. “Let me act,” saith this minister, “or else

I die. My soul fainteth for the longing which it hath for the souls of men. I could wish myself, as it were, accursed for my brethren—for those who are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Let me aid them up to happiness and heaven, though my poor name should be blotted out of the book of life, and though all remembrance of me should perish forever. Let my hand, though unseen—unthought of—unsolicited—undesired and unloved,—let it still labour night and day, and until it shall grow cold in death, to promote the great salvation.”

XXXV.

“*Let him deny himself.*”—Luke ix, 23.

THE minister for the times is a *self-denying* man. All things, with him, are rigidly held as subservient to the cause and honour of the Lord Jesus. Especially is this so of all things pertaining to his own personal enjoyment. He refrains, as a habit, from sumptuous fare; for it is not consistent with the health, intellect, and piety of a Christian and Christian minister. He refrains from extravagant and costly apparel; for its strong tendency is to administer to the pride of life. He occupies no costly mansion, indulges no splendid equipage, even if means are at command; for he would be an example of simplicity, and, at the same time, cut off every superfluity, so as to augment, to the utmost,

his means of good. He retires from all recreations, however innocent and pleasant, except so far as is necessary to the soundness of the physical and intellectual man. He resigns all reading, however attractive and beautiful, which does not aid him in the great purpose of his life. He shuts himself out not only from all company that is dangerous to his purity and his heart, but from social enjoyments of every sort that interfere with the constant and strenuous prosecution of his high calling. No precious moments are yielded to sleep beyond what nature, trained and invigorated by strictest temperance, requires. Personal ease and comfort, however important in the estimation of most, are ever placed by him in the class of secondary considerations. He submits to no criminal or needless exposure; yet, because of heat, or because of cold, and winds, and rain, he would rarely disappoint a waiting assembly—or fail to reach a sick man's door—or to stand, with his welcome presence, in the midst of forlorn and suffering ones to administer the needed cordial. Not his profit, but the profit of the many, is the rule of his life, and the object of his heart. If learning and fame allure, he is determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. If the opulent and the refined solicit him, he turns away to preach the gospel to the poor. If with him, as with others, there are preferences and partialities, he yet, in whatever is non-essential, becomes all things to all men, that he may by all means save some. In much patience, in afflictions,

in necessities, in distresses, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, and, if necessary, in stripes and imprisonments, he approves himself as a minister of God. He chooses to suffer affliction with the people of God, and esteems the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He denies himself—turns his back upon the world—loses his life, and finds it.

XXXVI.

“Take heed unto thyself.”—1 Tim. iv, 16.

THE minister for the times is a *watchful* man. He takes heed to himself. He sets a watch over all his heart, keeping it with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. He guards his spirit—his thoughts—his wishes and hopes. He watches with severe scrutiny the motives by which he is actuated, marks his evil tendencies, and guards against them with never-failing vigilance and care. Especially is he awake to the sin which easily besets him, fleeing from it as for his life. He is alive to the agency and influence of Satan; who desired to sift Peter, who often withstood Paul, and who sought to overthrow Jesus himself. He takes heed to all his conversations and interviews with others. In company, whether with his family, or with less familiar associates, he is never off his guard. He has pondered the never-ceasing influence of a single expression or

word—of a gesture or a glance, and amid all cheerful or earnest converse he is recollected. His diligent industry is guarded, that it never decline. With a thoughtful eye is noticed the flight of time, that no moment pass without being seized for good. All his conduct is circumspect; for the eyes of the world are upon him, and “God is o’erhead.” He watches his faith, that it be ever living and growing—his love, that it be ever full and abounding—his joy and rejoicing, that it be unceasing—his zeal, that it be ever glowing—his long-suffering, gentleness, patience, and meekness, that they be never weary. On the other hand, he watches to detect whatever remains in him of the carnal mind, that every hateful thing may be brought to a perfect crucifixion. He watches if there be any lingerings of unbelief, of pride, of dulness, of sloth, of impurity, of self-will, of malice, of envy, of love of the world, of fear of man, of covetousness, or of idolatry; that every stain may be laid open to the precious blood of sprinkling. In a word, he watches in all things. With eternal vigilance, the whole inward and outward man is guarded. He watches that he “enter not into temptation”—that he “may not fall”—may be “steadfast in the faith”—may “walk circumspectly”—may “make full proof of his ministry,” and nobly fulfil his high commission.

XXXVII.

"He prayeth."—Acts ix, 11.

THE minister for the times is a *praying* man. He speaks to God and tells to him all his heart, and pours into his ear his fervent supplications and prayers. If we would describe this minister in the fewest words possible, perhaps we could hardly do better than to say of him that "*he prayeth.*" Prayer is his habit—his characteristic—his life—his breath. What of a true minister of the Lord Jesus? *He prays.* He is a man that walks and converses with God. He lives to heaven;—breathes into the bosom of Jesus;—has no wish that he tells not to him;—has no thought that bends not thitherward;—has no plan that does not begin, progress, and end with Christ. Of his minutest, smallest matters, he whispers to his Saviour; and every trial, and perplexity, and sorrow, and care, are passed over to the great burden-bearer. He is careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, makes known his supplications unto God. "In everything by prayer"—this is the true presentation. In reading—in meditating—in sermon-making—in writing—in preaching—in visiting—in exhorting—in disciplining—in travelling—in recreating—in reposing—in all by prayer and supplication. This is one of the watchmen upon the walls that never hold their peace,

day nor night. He always prays, and faints not ;—prays with all prayer and supplication in the spirit ;—night and day praying exceedingly, offering supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men ;—praying everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting ;—in behalf of the saints, bowing his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant to them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith ; that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and depth, and length, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Behold here the stronghold of the genuine gospel minister. He prays—prays exceedingly—prays incessantly—prays in everything. Detect there the secret of his power—of his Christian balance amid every wind and flaw—of his overflowing and all-pervading baptisms—of his knowledge of the deep things of God—of the unction of his preaching—of his gracious conversation and bearing—of the intensity of his love, the glow and constancy of his zeal, and the loftiness of his joy.

XXXVIII.

"Glory to God in the highest."—Luke ii, 14.

THE minister for the times is a *praising* man. If he prays without ceasing, so in everything he gives thanks. To his purified vision, reasons for praising God arise constantly as his breath—multitudinous as the drops of the ocean, and important as eternity. The attitude of thanksgiving is his habit;—this is the tendency, the shape of his soul. Praise is never absent from his spirit, though varying frequently in its action;—now "sitting silently," now towering aloft, expanding the soul to its utmost tension; breathing upward to God in many a triumphant song, and almost impatient to break away from earthly fetters, and seize upon mightier powers and nobler instruments with which to trumpet forth the high praises of God and the Lamb.

His God is reconciled. Hell has opened its mouth, but failed of its prey. His past sins are as though they never were. Infinite grace has changed him. He is already in the kingdom—a fellow-citizen of the saints, and of the household of God. Thousands and millions have entered before him, and millions more are coming—a multitude which no man can number. His name is among those of the blessed ones; he is nearing the heaven of eternal praises. The spirit of that world flows forth to meet him. He already sympathizes with the

heavenly glory, and kindles as he approaches. He hastens, and aspires to be a seraph on high. With open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. He catches the sweet notes, first struck on earth from lips inspired, and rolling down through long generations. He joins in the song of Moses and Israel, and his heart dances at the notes of Miriam's timbrel. As he listens to the voice of Deborah, saying, "I will sing unto the Lord," from afar he answers back, "I will praise the God of Israel." While Hannah sings, "Holy is the Lord,"—"No rock is like our God," is his glad response. On the identical strains that were swept from the harp of Israel's bard, his spirit rises every day to God. If, listening with the shepherds, he hears angelic notes rolling in mid-air, and singing, "Glory be to God," his rapturous soul responds, "Amen! Hosanna in the Highest!" If, standing without those cold prison-walls, he hears Paul and Silas far within, singing praises to God, he catches the apostolic notes and apostolic fire, and is ready to go to prison and to death. With every holy song, whether past, present, or future,—whether sung on earth or in happier worlds, his whole being sympathizes. All praise is not too great—all is not sufficient. A "thousand tongues" would be inadequate—an angel's harp too faint and slow. The great chorus of the ransomed, as they shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads—all,

all will be as nothing when compared with the infinite righteousness—the boundless grace—the divine glory.

XXXIX.

“In the regions beyond.”—2 Cor. x, 16.

THE minister for the times is an *aggressive* man. “All the world,” is one of the capital ideas in the apostolic commission. The world God loved—the world Christ came to ransom—for the world he died—to the world, *all* the world, he directed his gospel to be carried. In each minister’s charter it is written, “Compass and save the world to the utmost extent possible.” Accordingly, the true minister reaches out and abroad. He neglects not his more special charge. He takes heed to the particular flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer; yet, meanwhile, the world is on his heart. He feels, and weeps, and labours for the race. He refuses to confine himself to his own special locality. He passes out into the highways and hedges, throws himself amid waste places, wakes up the joyful sound where Christ is not named, and helps, as a wise master-builder, to lay foundations of uprising churches, and permits no space within the limits of his consecrated powers to lie without the field of heavenly cultivation. He struggles to enlist his church into the same spirit

of aggressive and holy enterprise. The good which, by himself alone, may not be compassed, he will reach, if possible, by the co-operation of others. He forgets not those desolate regions where Christ is known but partially, or where he was never named. His spirit is identical with that of the missionary; of all whose sorrows, trials, joys, and successes, he is an active partaker. Himself and his church take strong hold of the work of the world's evangelization and conversion. This is recognized as the great, the high commission of the Church militant. He knows no gospel—no Church—no salvation, designed to be retained in any one country or continent. The fire of heaven, that warms his heart, is, in its very nature, expansive and aggressive. It has “free course,”—it “runs everywhere.” The righteousness of Zion goes forth as brightness—the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth. Gentiles see it, and kings behold its glory. He is a watchman that keeps not silence, and gives the Lord no rest till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. “Freely ye have received—freely give,” is written in letters of light upon the escutcheon of Christianity. Expansiveness is inseparable from its genius. It is a fire, and it spreads all around. It is light, and it flashes in every direction. It is love, and the race all its object. It is a mustard-seed, and it germinates and grows, a tree on whose branches the fowls of the air come to lodge. It is a sound, and it runs into all the earth, and its voice to the end of the

world. It is power, and its mighty impulses fly through the earth.

The minister for the times is this principle of heavenly electricity in personification. In a sense not merely poetical, the world is his parish. He is wedded to man. The world, as a generation of immortal beings, is in his arms—pressing upon his heart—living in his prayers—passing in review in his meditations—and acted upon by whatever sacred agency is within his reach to wield for the effectuating of their undying welfare. No time is to be squandered ; but every moment is to be bought up, not for the momentary happiness of an individual, but for the everlasting life of a world. Every fragment must be gathered—no superfluity of expense must be indulged, in order to swell to the utmost the stream of mercy that is to flow for the refreshing of the nations. It is the seed-time, and it is brief, and the harvest following is the harvest of eternity, and they who sow largely shall reap also largely, and they who sow sparingly shall reap sparingly. It is the harvest-time, and the field is the world, and it is white, and he that reapeth receiveth wages, and he shall bring his sheaves with him, and the fruit he gathers shall be to life eternal.

XL.

"All are yours."—1 Cor. iii, 22.

THE minister for the times is a *catholic* man. He has his tastes and preferences. His principles of theology and Christian polity are well defined and settled. He approves not every peculiarity existing in other denominations, any more than he commends everything among those of his own name. In no institutions merely human does he look for perfection; yet sect and party are, with this man, among the things which are held in low estimation. It is one of the things attaching to the Christian world, which he would fain forget forever. The divisions in the body of Christ constitute one of his deepest, sorest griefs, and tend to mantle his cheek with shame in behalf of a frail and imperfect Church. In fostering and prolonging the spirit of sect among Christians, he takes no part whatever. His dignified and spiritual mind towers above all such earthly and grovelling movements. He aims to forget that he belongs anywhere save with the great brotherhood of saints. It has ceased to be his first care that a particular party should be increased and prosperous. To bring the world to Christ and to heaven, is the idea that engrosses his thoughts and plans, and absorbs his soul. By the rule of sacred Scripture he aims to quadrate all his views, regarding no human speculation—accept-

ing no theological symbols that do not conform to this infallible standard. So, also, he looks not to any given party as the sole enclosure of Christ's disciples. He doubts not that there are those, of various folds, who are equally dear to the great Shepherd. Partition walls rising between different ranks of Christians, are nothing in the eye of the Master save an offence; and in a similar manner are they viewed by the true and enlightened servant. His eye of simplicity glances over the commonwealth of saints, omitting, if possible, to discern the barriers which themselves have erected in the midst. Neither his Bible, his conscience, his reason, nor his heart, dictates or urges him to recognize these. He knows, of a certainty, that they are not of the precious metals, and belong not to the heavenly edifice. He sees clearly that they are, rather, hay, wood, and stubble; and the fire shall one day consume them, so that so much as a vestige shall not remain.

Hence, he loves not sect, but the Church of the living God, wherever existing. He claims kindred, he proffers union, wherever two or three are gathered together, not in the name of a party, but in the name of Christ. With that spirit which clamours for Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,—one, to the exclusion of the rest,—he has no fellowship. He glories not in man, nor in man's carnal envying, strife, and divisions. Not one, merely,—all are his; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to

come ;—all are his possession, and he is Christ's. This heavenly minded minister dwells and expatiates above the noise of party. His contemplations and employments are better than this, as the heavens are better than the earth. His eye is too much upon Christ—too much upon salvation—too much upon that blessed world where all are one, that he should, for a moment, condescend even to *imagine* there could be a party line drawn between himself and one of the disciples. No ! He blesses the Church, and the whole Church, of the living God. He rejoices in the equal goodly fellowship glowing in his soul for every saint of every name and of every land. He seizes the apostolic benediction, and shouts, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen !" He rejoices as, with the old prophetic vision, he sees them coming from the east and west, from the north and south, to sit down in the kingdom of God. He triumphs in the glad gathering, within the heavenly temple, from every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

XLI.

"A vessel unto honour."—2 Tim. ii, 21.

THE minister for the times is a *dignified* man. And yet there is no affectation of dignity. There is no studied stiffness—no pomp or display. There is no ceremonious gait—no excessive preciseness of speech, countenance, or general manners. It is a dignity without a consciousness of its existence. It is an easy, simple, and, withal, an extremely graceful garment. It is a godly, evangelical dignity. It is that which unfailingly attaches itself to a man who has more to do with things eternal than with things temporal;—who studies, as a habit, the deep matters of God's providence and grace;—who is an inhabitant of the world of the Bible;—who is pledged to Christ alone;—who spends no time for the meat that perishes;—who is asking not after momentary results, but whose speculations and inquiries "wander through eternity;"—who has resigned this world and embraced heaven;—whose incessant reaching is for everlasting life.

Such a man—such a minister, is dignified. There are none but will be impressed with it. Few will trifle in his presence, for he is believed to be one that has much to do with God. All will respect him, for it is clear that the motives by which he is influenced are far higher and purer than what actuate most men. His is the dignity of holiness—of

purity—of death to the world. It is the dignity of faith;—he believes God, and is not ashamed. It is the dignity of love;—God is the centre of his soul, and he loves his neighbour as himself. It is the dignity of hope;—for his is the hope of glory. It is the dignity of action;—he lives to save the souls of men. It is the dignity of relation;—he is a child of God. It is the dignity of prospect;—he is an heir of heaven. It is the dignity of station, for he is an ambassador of the King of kings;—the dignity of knowledge, for he knows the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent;—the dignity of rank—his crown awaits him;—the dignity of beauty—he is a new creation;—the dignity of safety—angels encamp around;—the dignity of happiness—God is his portion;—and the dignity of permanence—he shall never be moved.

XLII.

“He was sick—but God had mercy on him.”—Phil. ii, 27.

THE minister for the times is a *healthy* man. It is not meant that no minister of feeble health is adapted to do good to the present generation; for some of this class are well known to be among the most useful labourers in the vineyard of Christ. Though faint, they yet pursue. Their energies, though slender and declining, are all laid upon the altar, and are crowned with the blessing of Heaven. Yet

these times require of the minister who would be fully adapted to meet all their demands, that he be in full possession of bodily health and activity. Great labours are expected of him. Calls for ministerial effort are various, as well as arduous ; and the minister of this age should attempt much, and accomplish excellent things. Hence, let him be a man whose physical machinery is perfect. Let his blood flow cheerily, and his nerves be firm, and his muscles "strong as iron bands," and his limbs never lack energy and elasticity. Let his countenance be fresh, and fair, and animated, and joyous. Let his lungs be strong and perfect, and his voice as a tried and well-tuned instrument. To him let the wind be as delicious music, and the storm a plaything, and the cold refreshing, and the heat congenial. To his healthful and glad eye let every day, whether of clouds or sunshine, breathe but enchantment ; and as he springs, at early morning, from his couch of repose, let it be as a giant refreshed, and as a strong man rejoicing to run a race. Thus let the good minister abide firm amid gathering years. Let him not make haste to decline. He must grow old ; but, so far as possible, let it be like the old age of Moses, the eye not being dim, nor the natural force abated.

For this, he will, of course, be temperate in all meats and drinks—in all labours and excitements. All will be regular within. The conscience will be void of offence. Hope will live in perennial bloom. Faith will be constant as the breath. Prayer and

praise will abound. Every faculty will be in strong, yet temperate exercise. There will be no rusting, on the one hand, nor wearing on the other ; but, as a select instrument, he will move and accomplish his earthly destiny, when the wheels of life shall stand still. All which the God of Nature, Providence, and Grace designed in his sojourn upon earth, is accomplished. He shakes himself for a great, a strong, and protracted effort. He begs of God to give him a long and a good day, that he may fight manfully and finish his course, and leave his mark, or, rather, impress his Saviour's image on the world.

XLIII.

"Am I not free?"—1 Cor. ix, 1.

THE minister for the times is an *independent* man. He calls no man master upon earth. His independence is discerned in his searchings of the Holy Scriptures. In those solemn and responsible studies, he forgets, in a sense, all human authorities and human sects, and rises above all differing creeds and varying systems. He respects, of course, the profound theologians of past ages. He acknowledges there were "giants in those days;" yet he recognizes but one master—that is, Christ. He yields to no view of any passage of the Holy Scriptures, for the reason that it is the view of any uninspired man. On all the Scriptures he labours to

form an unbiased judgment in the matter of interpretation; while, at the same time, he refuses no aid that may be proffered or afforded. If an eminent apostle treated with earnest disdain any attempt, on the part of the Corinthian Christians, to arrange themselves as parties, whether under himself, or Apollos, or Cephas, with the more propriety does the true minister refrain from identifying himself with the opinions of any conspicuous leader, or with any religious or doctrinal partyism. He will "not be brought under the power" of any such influence. And while independent in his theoretical views of divine doctrine, he has equal independence in preaching and teaching them. He preaches what he believes, regardless of fear or favour; and, in his general movements and character, his great inquiry is, not what will be merely pleasing or acceptable, but what is duty. This is the great pole-star of his life, from which his calm yet earnest eye never, for one moment, wanders. If, while duty is secured, he may likewise please all men, he will not fail to do so. He will run all lengths for this, and make any sacrifice, and study every adaptation to differing tastes and prejudices, so long as right and duty be not infringed. But, for the sake of pleasing all men—for the sake of concentrating upon himself the smiles of a world, he will not transgress—he will not be unfaithful to the great trust committed to his keeping. His is a determined independence, yet not that which is obtrusive and offensive;—not so much that which is outward and

ostensible, as that which impregnates the spirit of the man, and whose movements are mostly unseen and noiseless. You will read it not by insulated and prominent outbreaks, but as you read true dignity, adorning every thought, and motion, and action.

XLIV.

"Quit you like men."—1 Cor. xvi, 13.

THE minister for the times is *a man*. In him is nothing weak and sickly ;—he has a vigorous, sound, and healthy spirit. In him is nothing mean, or low, or grovelling ;—he is honest, high-minded, honourable. There is no whining and complaining ;—he is forever rejoicing that men and things are better than they might have been. He is no croaker, for he constantly knows that if wickedness abounds, so does righteousness also ; and that, on the whole, no former days have witnessed greater efforts than the present for the spread of Christ's kingdom. He descends to no strifes or bickerings—the world has other and more elevated demands upon him. Stopping not to participate in the transient hopes of time, the world's regeneration is alone sufficient to fill his eye. He is manly in his views of saving truth ; for his ear is ever turned toward God, to hear what he will speak. Man may err, but "*thy word is truth.*" He is manly in his notions of duty and action—viewing that here God's voice is to be heard, and,

being heard, is to be obeyed, though the "heavens fall." He is manly in the feelings and sympathies of his heart;—manly in the action and results of his intellectual nature;—manly in the spirit and bearing which he always and everywhere exhibits. His conduct is manly; and that, too, whether he be alone, or with the multitude;—whether in his own family, or amid the families of his congregation. He is manly in conducting the ceremonies of public worship, and in the humble exercises of the conference-room and the praying circle. He is manly in all his dealings with men;—manly in his studies and recreations—in his instructions of the young and of the more mature. He is manly in his intercourse with Christians, and with those who are "without;"—manly in his adherence to his own religious sentiments, and in all his deportment toward ministers and Christians of other names, and toward all mankind. He is manly in his plans, and manly in their execution. He is manly in rebuking, exhorting, persuading, sympathizing, weeping;—and there is no act, or word, or spirit, or motion, pertaining to him, which does not accord entirely with the true and proper dignity of a man.

Part Second.

THE MINISTER FOR THE TIMES
AS A STUDENT.

THE MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR THE TIMES.

PART II.

I.

"Meditate."—1 Tim. iv, 15.

THE minister for the times is a *student*. The case appears a very plain one. In the first place, in addition to a sound mind as a basis, certain qualifications are necessary for the minister. Secondly, those qualifications should be, as nearly as possible, those of the first preachers of Christianity, saving, of course, the miraculous gifts with which they were endowed. Thirdly, such qualifications must be secured in one of two ways: either by revelation, superadded to ordinary study and acquisition, or by the latter mode alone;—accompanied, it is true, and essentially aided, by the blessing of God, humbly and constantly sought. That ministerial qualifications are, in these days, to be conferred by immediate revelation, whether in the mode, or to the extent, in which extraordinary aid was afforded to the apostles, is, I suppose, not expected by any rational mind. These qualifications, therefore, must be obtained in the ordinary modes of acquisition.

In other words, they are to be the result of patient, close, prolonged, and prayerful study.

But what are the acquired qualifications suited to a minister for these times? We answer that they are, so far as possible, such qualifications as were acquired and possessed in the beginning; and nothing less must be esteemed appropriate or adequate. This view appears amply confirmed not only by the inspired picture of an "able minister," but also by the apostolic charge to Timothy, whom Paul solemnly addresses, saying, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This means that the apostolic learning was to be communicated to their successors, and received by them; and this with a view to their competency for instructing others.

What, then, was this apostolic learning? It was the learning of men who had been long, and largely, and personally instructed by the Great Teacher;—men who, for years, had sat at the feet of "Him that speaketh from heaven," and whose speaking was such as never man uttered;—men who often wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth;—men that were the companions of Jesus as he went through cities and villages teaching, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom;—men who drank deeply at the very fountain-head of truth and wisdom,—to whom thus the great book of revelation was unveiled,—who listened as, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, Christ expound-

ed unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself, until their hearts burned within them as he talked with them, and opened to them the lively oracles. The apostolic learning is that of men who were the companions of the Lord Jesus all the time that he went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John to the very day that he was taken up ;—men to whom he “ expounded all things,”—who saw and heard the “ many other ” things which Jesus did and spoke, by far too numerous to be written, and too astonishing for a sinful world to believe.

Judge, then, what must have been the learning of the first gospel ministers. They were eye-witnesses from the beginning, and “ had perfect understanding of all things from the very first.” Are there any privileges greater in this age for securing the qualifications adapted to a preacher of the gospel ? Are the most studious and profound in this generation any better prepared—*can* they be better prepared to perform this solemn ministry ? Can they know more of Christ—of his doctrine—of his spirit and practice—and of the best modes of instructing and persuading men so as that they may be saved ? What, then, is the inference ? This, simply ; that if the deepest and most diligent study will not, to say the least, bring us farther than to the standard of apostolic learning, then any less degree of study will leave us less qualified than were they for the great ministerial work ; and what they taught and preached, we shall not be fully “ able

to teach others also." In other words, this ministry will not, and, without miracle, cannot, be perfectly accomplished in us and by us.

Thus the conclusion is irresistible, that the good and able minister—the minister for these times—is, and must be, a diligent, faithful, earnest, and untiring student. Aiming at nothing less than primitive acquirements and excellence, he will give his mind and heart to the things of God, and, by all appropriate means, pursue after divine knowledge. He studies not everything. Thousands and thousands of books he never reads; but he looks earnestly for every acquisition—every ornament suitable and needful for his most important work. To these he devotes himself unreservedly, rigidly adapting his means to the end in view. He expects no miraculous interference to qualify him suddenly, and without his own strong effort, for the minister's work. If he desires to speak or read in "other tongues," he thinks of no way to do so other than hard study, with God's blessing. If he would understand all saving truth, he looks for no angelic teacher to appear for his special benefit; but he gives himself to this truth, and searches as for hid treasure, and ponders, and weighs, and compares spiritual things with spiritual. Longing to find out all appropriate modes of approaching men with a view to their instruction, awakening, and salvation, he sets his mind to think and inquire for these with a zeal which nothing can quench. He is ever and always searching for the "new things

and old"—pondering the fairest shape in which to present them to the attention of the multitude—running hither and thither in his mind after every appropriate and powerful illustration, and examining long and carefully to make sure of the exact spirit and manner of communication, that he may thus be a scribe well instructed—a minister approved of God—a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. He is, in a word, a reading, meditative, thoughtful man. His mind is on the alert,—it is awake and alive to one thing.

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”

II.

“*Mighty in the Scriptures.*”—Acts xviii, 24.

THE minister for the times is a student of *the Holy Scriptures*. He has gone over the Bible carefully, critically, and prayerfully,—searching diligently what was the mind of the Spirit in every book and in every passage. The Bible is, comprehensively,

the book of his life—the grand centre and subject of his studies. His labour in all study is to become as familiarly and extensively acquainted with this book as, in his circumstances, is possible. This is his principle—this is his practice. He seizes every moment, and every means, and every privilege, for extending his acquaintance with the divine oracles. Not satisfied with a knowledge of the original tongues of the Bible, he seeks all necessary historical knowledge of the several writers of the Scripture books, and of the times in which they lived ; also, a knowledge of the principles of criticism. He will attain, either from the books themselves, or from more recent authors, as competent a knowledge as may be of the things treated of, and alluded to, in the sacred writings. Hence, he familiarizes himself with Sacred Geography, Chronology, Civil and Political History, and Archæology. In other words, he labours to understand whatever respects the literature and climate of the places and countries where the events related in the Bible transpired ; and whatever defines the times when such events took place, as well as of other matters mentioned or alluded to, together with their manners and customs.—*Prof. Stuart.* It is his aim, as he reads the Scriptures, *to understand everything*, so far as it may be, and ought to be, understood. He would bring himself up, as near as possible, to the perception of that very meaning which was in the mind of the sacred writers themselves when they penned those books. Differences of time,

place, climate, scenery, education, manners, customs, and government,—differences which tend to throw obscurity around many passages of the Scriptures, he labours assiduously to overcome. By appropriate and comprehensive reading—by deep, Christian, and careful study and meditation, he endeavours to throw himself back amid Scripture times. Scripture names are, with him, as household words. Scripture localities are, to his eye, very much as the remembered groves, and hills, and fountains of his native abode. His purified imagination pictures forth, in vivid perspective, the hallowed scenes of sacred story. The hills of Judea, the plains of the Jordan, the excellency of Carmel, the glory of Lebanon, the shores of Genesareth, and the richness and beauty of Gilead and of Bashan, are to him as familiar objects. And he roams with patriarchs and prophets, and long and deeply listens to the bard of Israel, and mingles with the apostles, and walks with Jesus, and is charmed and subdued with the eloquence which flowed with celestial fulness from lips inspired. He has sought, in a sense, the mind, the ear, the information, the associations and feelings of an intelligent Jew, who may be supposed to have listened to the strains of David, Isaiah, or Jeremiah,—to the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, or John,—to the simplicity of Matthew, or the logic of Paul. He has acquired a capacity to live in past and distant ages, inhale their atmosphere, and move and dwell familiarly with their realities; and, without embar-

rassment, to converse with scenes long past away. And this capacity was reached, not by miracle, but by a pure and devoted mind, acting with a strong and well-directed effort, put forth with constancy and long perseverance.

III.

"Take heed—unto the doctrine."—1 Tim. iv, 16.

THE minister for the times is a student of *Theology*. Systematic Theology is "such a methodically arranged form of the great truths and precepts of religion as enables the theological student to contemplate them in their natural connexion, and thus to perceive both the mutual dependence of the parts and the symmetry of the whole." By careful and prayerful study, the faithful minister aims to ascertain what are the doctrines of the Bible. He seeks to understand clearly and familiarly the various arguments drawn from Scripture and from reason for the establishment of each specific doctrine, as well as the objections to each that may have been urged, together with the refutation of such objections. He receives the exhortation of the apostle, to take heed to himself and to the doctrine, and perceives clearly that on his being competent here depends very much his ability and success in the great work to which he is called. He establishes himself in the truth. The great doctrines of the Christian scheme

stand forth in living, breathing, divine forms before the eye of his mind. He contemplates them in their separate existence, as also in their mutual relations, properties, and affinities. For he recognizes not the doctrines of revelation merely as insulated blocks, standing apart from each other, but rather as parts of one majestic and glorious structure. "Like the stones of a well-constructed arch," says a living writer, "every part of the doctrine of revelation is not only essential to the rest, but occupies the exact place which gives union and stability to the whole. The different doctrines cohere. They all unite in the guilt and corruption of man, and in the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ. If any one part be taken away, the remainder becomes disjointed and useless. For what is the doctrine of redemption without the fall? or that of the fall without the doctrine of redemption? And what is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, unless sustained by both of the preceding? And what is the infinitely holy character of God, if separated from the other doctrines of which it is the key-stone—the essential primary part which knits the whole arch together?"—*Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta.*

Thus the true minister not only studies the doctrines of the Bible, each by itself, and that with the utmost care, precision, research, and candour, but he studies them as a system—each having its appropriate position and use, and, in their united capacity, constituting a magnificent plan whose author is God, and whose development is destined to evolve

the eternal happiness of millions of the race. He has no idea of fulfilling his commission, especially as a teacher and preacher, without great effort here. So far as industry, and every appropriate means, can make him such, he is evangelical, accurate, judicious, and profound, as a theologian. Every day he is pushing his researches, reviewing the great doctrines of the cross, applying them deeply to his own heart, and laying hold of every aid, that he may perceive the truth in all its extent, and in all its relations. He cultivates a strong, vigorous, well-balanced, theological mind. He is a zealous, humble, untiring student of the things of God; and, taking heed to himself and to the doctrine, he both saves himself and them that hear him.

IV.

“*Walk about Zion.*”—Psa. xlviii, 12.

THE minister for the times is a student of *Church History*. He is aware that an accurate and extensive knowledge of the history of the Church is as important to a minister, as such a knowledge of civil and political history is to the statesman. He would trace the causes of the prosperity and decline of Christianity. He looks after the origin, progress, and effects of religious persecution. He examines the origin and history of religious errors, and the means by which they have been promoted,

and especially the measures by which they have been subdued or checked. He searches that, by a familiar acquaintance with the history of the Church, he may seize upon numerous interesting and powerful illustrations for enriching and adorning discourse, and enforcing truth. He would thus, also, confirm his faith, and learn the importance of stability and calmness in troublous times. He would, by profound attention to these studies, promote his piety, improve his memory, imagination, and reasoning powers, and greatly enlarge his knowledge of mankind.—*Prof. Emerson.*

Nor, in examining the history of religion, and of religious opinions, does he confine himself to ages long past away. He watches carefully more recent and present aspects of religious belief; for he is aware that the religious history of the past tends strongly to illuminate that of the present, while what is now transpiring essentially aids to account for many religious phenomena of former ages. Then he knows, also, that a knowledge of the present religious opinions, as well as of those of other times, is indispensable to any proper and effectual defence of the truth as it is in Jesus. The minister for the times discerns the present age to be rife with religious errors. Most of these, indeed, are not new, but simply a revival of old and putrid error, such as the history of the Church assures him sprang up centuries ago, and died, to be resuscitated in after ages by new races of enthusiasts and fanatics. Yet he sees that these modern editions of former here-

sies, together with any revisions and alterations they may have undergone, are all necessary to be known by the preacher, and must form a part of his reading and studies, in order that he may be qualified to meet and overthrow them. "Opinions, in some respects new,—new, at least, to the common people,—are almost daily introduced. And besides, old errors are sustained by new sophistries; and the preacher who would keep pace in minute acquaintance with the march of novelty in the theological world, especially at this day, when the means are so multiplied for accelerating the progress of thought through society, will find sufficient occupation for all the time he can well spend from the immediate business of his calling."—*Dr. Skinner.*

V.

"*Study to show thyself—a workman.*"—2 Tim. ii, 15.

THE minister for the times is a student of *Preaching*. It is easy to conceive that a man may be deeply learned in the Holy Scriptures, and in theology, while yet he may essentially fail as a *preacher*. It is one thing to know, and another thing to communicate;—one thing to be learned, and a different thing to be eloquent. And far too numerous have been the examples of radical deficiency in the great work of preaching, where learning and piety were not wanting. Hence the wise minister recog-

nizes *preaching* as one of his prominent departments of study. He inquires diligently after the elements of efficiency and power in public discourse, and especially in religious discourse. Eager to detect each and all of these, and keeping them ever before his eye, he labours, by the appropriate studies and disciplinary exercises, to correct every error, improve every faculty, and supply every deficiency. With him there is special importance, not only in the question *what* he shall bring before the people, but also in the inquiry *how* it shall be presented. What is the exact shape that will be the best possible, and the most effectual, in the accomplishment of the great object? What is the right method with this and the other theme? What is the most appropriate style in every case? What is the action? And how is it to be acquired, and what the obstacles to be overcome? In a word, wherein lies the ability to proclaim the glorious gospel in ways and modes the most instructive, impressive, persuasive, and saving, that is possible in human instrumentality?

A great question! worthy of the severest, most eager, and constant scrutiny of the minister of righteousness. A divine accomplishment! worthy the largest labours and sacrifices to attain. Nor without such labours and sacrifices is it likely to be secured. "The business of choosing, adapting, and analyzing subjects of discourse;—of arranging, comparing, correcting, and applying discourse itself, and of so living, and so disciplining the heart, as to keep

one's self in the necessary mood and tone of mind for the just enunciation and delivery of discourse,—this is work to be no otherwise done by any man than by laborious and indefatigable application.” “Let no one suppose that anything will ever make it easy work to speak well in public. Occasions and circumstances may rouse the mind into high action, and the result may be surprising displays of eloquence without much specific effort at preparation; but life is not made up of occasions of extraordinary excitement. Let all persons who design to be efficient and successful speakers in public, bid adieu to sensual indulgence, resist all temptations to mental sloth, and make a covenant with labour, as their portion and pleasure under the sun.” —*Dr. Skinner.*

VI.

“*Prove your own selves.*”—1 Cor. xiii, 5.

THE minister for the times is a student *of man*. A profound knowledge of mankind is one of the indispensable qualifications of the successful minister. He must know, to an eminent degree, “what is in man.” As a preacher, he should especially know what are the directest avenues to the mind and the heart. In other words, he must know, without mistake, what it is that generally interests the minds of men, and what it is that moves, and affects, and sways their hearts. He must ponder well the springs

of human sympathy and action. He must be familiar as well with their antipathies as their partialities. Contemplating a given result, he must know the means, and all the combinations of means, that are necessary to produce it. He must know how to avoid defeat, on the one hand, and how to ensure success, on the other. To this important end the good minister studies deeply his own mind. Aware that the great principles of human nature are common to all, he seeks to know himself, that he may thus know all others. He marks the diversified agencies that move and affect his own heart—he notices the thoughts and modes that impress and convince his own mind, as well as those which fail of such an effect. He examines well all that contributes to the result, when he himself is pleased for his good to edification, or when the opposite influence is realized. Thus it is, that while disposed to be useful, he possesses, also, the requisite ability; and is skilful to please all men, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

The good minister, then, studies *man*. He communes with his own heart. He examines, and proves himself. For the same end he converses—he peruses history and biography, especially biographies of eminent and successful ministers. He is deeply read in intellectual science and ethics, and in the Holy Scriptures. Always, and everywhere, he studies mankind; and his profiting herein is manifest in all his public and private ministrations.

VII.

"The prophets have inquired and searched diligently."

1 Pet. i, 10.

THE minister for the times is a *diligent* student. He redeems time to the utmost. He realizes that every waking, conscious moment is to send after him its eternal echo, as he shall traverse the cycles of interminable ages. Hence, he longs with a great desire that every passing moment may receive from him the fairest, holiest impress. He is diligent—he is never unemployed—he is never employed triflingly. He buys up every precious hour and minute, that he may finish his course with joy, and the ministry he has received of the Lord Jesus. He seizes the early morning; and while thousands, less resolute and diligent, are slumbering, he is pushing rapidly and strongly the great work of his life.

Dr. Doddridge owed the production of his "Family Expositor," and most of his other writings, to his rising at five, instead of seven o'clock in the morning; and he correctly computed that such a difference in the hour of rising, maintained during forty years, would, reckoning eight hours a day, add ten years of time for study to a man's life. So many precious years the good minister may not sacrifice for the sake of any graceless self-indulgence. He hastens to redeem them; for, in so many redeemed years, he may, with God's help,

make an impression on the world that will affect the latest ages of time, and gather for himself glory that will never fade away.

John Wesley, in one of his sermons, writes that, sixty years before, he began to rise at four, instead of seven or after, and that he had continued to do so ever since. Thus, on the principle of reckoning above alluded to, he redeemed twenty-two years and ten months, which, during those sixty years, and with his former habits, would have been lost, and worse than lost. So, also, an eminent living writer of our own country, who has blessed the Church with some of the most precious writings in our religious literature, gave to those writings, almost exclusively, his early morning hours.

So diligent—so covetous of time, is the minister who is adapted to this generation. He denies himself, takes up his cross, sells all that he has, and buys—*time*. And having bought it, and made it sure, then he uses it. That solemn page—the page that is to be reviewed at the judgment—is well filled and pure. He labours with his might. Every energy is rallied to the subject or point under investigation. If the thoughts wander for a moment, they are immediately summoned anew, and led on with increased energy and power, until the allotted task is finished, and the mind has triumphed.

VIII.

"If thou seekest her as silver."—Prov. ii, 4.

THE minister for the times is a *faithful* student. While he studies diligently, he studies effectually and successfully. He does not trifle with his mind, nor with the great matters on which he undertakes to meditate. If he reads, he reads so as to possess himself fully and clearly of the views of the writer, and gives the proper arrangement and classification to whatever he may acquire. Hence, he reads deliberately, attentively, and cautiously,—suffering nothing to escape his observation that may be of use to him in his professional work, or in the general improvement of his mind and heart.

If he writes, he does justice to his theme to the full extent that his abilities will allow. He gives no place to restlessness or impatience;—none to sloth, or dulness, or improper haste. He carefully investigates and compares. He guards against any defective reasoning and doubtful conclusions. He thinks as patiently, as justly, as profoundly, as possible. He gives due attention that his style may accord with his sentiments, and that the whole performance be as nearly perfect as may be.

If he is preparing for preaching, he has the same spirit of faithfulness as when in the actual work of preaching. There are similar aspirations for the welfare of souls—the same awful sense of respon-

sibility. There is the same Holy Spirit prompting, encouraging, helping him. He is faithful in his theme, and in the views he adopts. He searches the Scriptures with eagerness and candour. He labours to find out the mind of the Spirit. He goes after all appropriate thought, argument, illustration, and embellishment. He renders his discourse as strong, as evangelical, as persuasive and finished, as he is able to render it. With the means at his command, he spares no pains in this all-important branch of his studies.

The faithful minister is a faithful student. Whether his opportunities for study be many or few, and whether the amount of his studying be greater or less, he studies faithfully. He never contents himself with half-formed notions. He scorns to be superficial. For the half day, or the half hour, he gives himself wholly to his work; and the general integrity, conscientiousness, and uprightness of his character, are as active in the department of study, as in any other department of his ministerial labours.

IX.

“*Continue*—”—1 Tim. iv, 16.

THE minister for the times is a *persevering* student. When has a gospel minister finished up, and laid aside, his important studies? When is the Holy Bible, in language and style—in poetry and song—

in vision and prophecy—in parable and simple description—in narrative and epistle—in argumentation and exhortation—in ethics and divinity—when is it all comprehended and understood, and to be laid aside as a concluded study? When is all Christian doctrine canvassed—all its relations seen—all its true arrangement decided—all its applications perceived—all its arguments marshalled and weighed—all objections met—all its sublimity and glory appreciated—all its wondrous power realized? When is all preaching perfected—all Christian and gospel themes spread forth in transcendent beauty and power—all elements of holy eloquence seized, and wöven irreversibly into the contexture of the preacher's being—all soul-subduing efficiency and force guarantied to every presentation from the pulpit—and every sermon such, that were it otherwise than what it is, it must inevitably be inferior?

Questions such as these require, of course, no answer. All of us are children; and, in respect to progress, immensely more is the ground we have to traverse, than what we have already passed. If the mighty Newton—the intellectual Coryphæus of the human race—contemplated himself as having but picked up a pebble or two on the shore of the great ocean of truth, much more should Christian ministers assume to themselves but to have commenced the sublime ascent of knowledge and attainment.

The minister for the times, then, is a student now, and a student always. In this respect, he is ever

reaching forth to the things that are before him. He never esteems himself to have become sufficiently learned in the things of God, nor sufficiently competent, without further study, to deliver perfectly the gospel message. And even when old age has come over him, and his eyes are "darkened," and his mind enfeebled, and all his powers weary and faltering, he still communes deeply with the Holy Scriptures, and is a glad and humble student and learner at the feet of the great Teacher.

Part Third.

THE MINISTER FOR THE TIMES
AS A PREACHER.

THE MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR THE TIMES.

PART III.

I.

"Preach."—2 Tim. iv, 2.

THE minister for the times is a *Preacher*. Preaching is the vocal and public proclamation of the gospel; and this is the capital office and work of the minister—and of the minister for these times, as well as for all time. It was thus that the gospel dispensation commenced. Christ was announced by preaching. When He appeared, he came preaching. He passed through all the cities and villages, teaching, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, anointing him to preach the gospel to the poor. The apostolic commission was to *preach*. Paul was called, by God's grace, to preach Christ among the heathen. This was his special work; for Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Thus this apostle writes of those who were begotten through the gospel. Peter writes of such as were born not of corruptible seed, but by the word of God; and James writes of himself and others being begotten

with the word of truth. And how shall men believe in one of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? This is the divinely appointed instrumentality for the awakening and salvation of the race. Its importance, either from too much inadequate preaching, or from the multiplication of benevolent agencies, or from the degeneracy of the times, may have come to be more lightly esteemed than formerly. Yet preaching is still the great agency—the grand means for the world's regeneration. It is true now, as ever of old, that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing, by the proclamation of the word of God. Nor is he at all the minister for these times who hopes to save the souls of men by other means as effectually as by the preaching of the gospel. He has forgotten the ancient landmarks. He is striking out another path than that which He devised who gave the great gospel commission. Converse he should, at every opportunity. Write he should, wherever his pen may awaken, or guide, or comfort. The press he may use, so far as he has time, to aid the great cause for which he lives and acts. But let him not forget that preaching—*preaching* is his great business—his high calling—his heavenly ordnance—his celestial sword—his burnished weapon of warfare—his strong staff of accomplishment. Preaching has done wonders from the day of Pentecost to the present; and that, because it is God's own select instrumentality. Immeasurably the greater proportion of saints in Paradise, and

of the great multitude now travelling thither, were brought to salvation by gospel preaching. Preaching awoke them at first—led them on to repentance, faith, conversion, sanctification, and perseverance; while its solemn voice, like some strange, invisible power, is ever lifting the Christian toward God,—dying away on the pilgrim's ear only when the everlasting doors have shut him within the heavenly city. To the Jew, it may be a stumbling-block; to the wise of this world, it may appear as foolishness; while yet by such foolishness hath it pleased God to save them that believe. This is still the power of God and the wisdom of God;—this will still be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.

What, then, of the minister adapted to these times? He is a *preacher*. This is his work. For this he studies, and prays, and converses, and recreates, and eats, and drinks, and lives. This, in his mind, is the most weighty and important of all human transactions and efforts. By this, men are saved from an eternal hell, and exalted to immortal life. This is the joyful sound. This is the heavenly heralding. This is the startling note, effectively warning millions on millions away from the wrath to come. This is the solemn trumpet, echoing from hill-top to hill-top,—waking the “isles of the south,” and shaking the nations. Above all voices running along the earth, this is the voice which “devils fear,”—the voice which hushes to peace the heaving billows of grief and despair.

This is the music which charms the world, and transmutes terrestrial nature into the enchanting scenery of paradisiacal loveliness and glory.

II.

“*Not a novice.*”—1 Tim. iii, 6.

THE minister for the times preaches *intellectually*. He has clear mental conceptions of the several doctrines of the Bible, and of the general system of revealed truth. In other words, he is, as before seen, learned in the Scriptures, and all his discourses give evidence of such learning. As he dwells upon any given point of Scriptural doctrine or precept, his preaching contravenes not any other truth or precept. He is not a novice, but possessed of strong and manly understanding of the great charter of salvation. As he speaks, you discern the truth presented;—you observe the pertinency of the arguments and illustrations adduced in its support. You will perceive, to a greater or less extent, its relation to other truth. You will understand its applications and uses. What is preached is not mere rhapsody. The preaching goes not out in words. It is not an unstudied and ill-digested harangue, but it is an intellectual exercise. The intellect found full employ in its preparation, and has full employ in its delivery, and gives vigorous and healthy exercise to the minds of the hearers. They are con-

vinced that the man who addresses them possesses mind and judgment. They feel the force and propriety of his reasoning. They cannot deny him to be a "workman;" nor can they refuse him that respect which intellect fails not to command, and which every minister of the gospel should be competent to secure.

III.

"A teacher of the Gentiles."—1 Tim. ii, 7.

HENCE, the minister for the times preaches *instructively*. His preaching is perpetually instructive in the great and important things pertaining to religion. It is not a mere repetition of what is already known to the congregation. The preaching, it is true, has much to do with old and familiar truths; yet, even here, his discourse is instructive. Some new view is presented—or some new aspect rises to the eye—or some fresh confirmation is afforded to what was before partially doubtful—or some inference, previously unthought of, is deduced—or some new, distinct, and important impression, is stamped upon the mind and heart. There is brought forth from the treasury of God's word things new as well as old. Thus, while the understanding of the hearer has been addressed and exercised, it has been instructed also. The attentive hearer retires from the sermon a wiser, as well as a better man.

The new warmth and courage of his heart, inspired by the preaching, has much to do with the sacred instruction which has thus been fastened upon the mind.

And how does the minister gain this "aptness to teach?" He gains it, and gains it only, by his strong and unwearied diligence in sacred study and in prayer. He dwells very much with his Bible, and upon the appropriate modes of exhibiting gospel truth. He studies for constantly increasing power to teach and preach the glorious gospel. He meditates upon these things, and gives himself wholly to them. He is a successful scholar in the school of Christ. The treasures of sacred learning are unlocked to him. The kingdoms of Nature, Providence, and Grace, are open to his inquiring and ardent mind. His days and nights being thus employed, he advances with rapid strides in divine knowledge, and becomes a scribe well instructed. His mind is "thoroughly furnished;" and when he stands up to preach Christ and salvation, it is as one who has pondered deeply the things of God. He speaks of "excellent things." All the words of his mouth are in righteousness. Blessed is the man that heareth him; for his instructions are better than silver, and the knowledge of his lips than choice gold.

IV.

“*Understandest thou?*”—Acts viii, 30.

THE minister for the times preaches *understandingly*. Not only has he an intellectual view of the scheme, proportions, and relations, of religious truth; but he has felt the influence of this truth as it has impressed and transformed his heart. His soul has been sanctified through the truth. Hence it is that he preaches not only with a clear head, but with a feeling heart. Preaching the depravity of man, he is able not only to present the Scripture view, and its abundant confirmation from the history of the race; but especially does the history of his own heart answer back to the inspired presentation, and affords him indispensable aid in unfolding and impressing this essential truth. Preaching repentance, he preaches what he has felt, and still feels; and, therefore, knows how to explain and enforce. Preaching faith, he points to that Saviour in whom he has himself trusted, and still trusts, from moment to moment. Preaching pardon, he proclaims that which he knows, and testifies that which he has seen and felt in his own experience. Preaching renewal of heart and life, the blissful change in his own soul gives a glow and impressiveness to such discourse which is never seen where “knowledge” is absent. Preaching the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he tells of a heavenly, mighty influ-

ence, that has touched and fired his own heart with unearthly aspirations. Proclaiming the danger of wicked men, his thoughts are deeply coloured by the clear vision he has had of his own peril. Portraying the joys of piety, every feature upon the canvass receives a tinge and glory from the rejoicing spirit that is giving existence to the picture. Preaching Christ in all his offices and relations to man, all such preaching is essentially modified by his own position relatively to the Lord that bought him. It is no longer a dead letter. It is not a mere disquisition or essay. It is a discourse, rather, breathing with life—animated with the Spirit of God inhabiting the preacher's heart—glowing with heavenly love begotten within the man by Him who "maketh his ministers a flame of fire." Finally, if he expatiates upon the prospects of the Christian, and turns the eyes of the congregation toward "everlasting life," all discern at once that it is not a mere theory with which he lingers, but that he is giving joyous expression to his own blessed hope, cast as an anchor within the veil.

V.

"In the word and doctrine."—1 Tim. v, 17.

THE minister for the times preaches *doctrinally*. He presents in his preaching the several doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. Especially does he exhibit, largely and fully, what are termed the fundamental or essential truths of Christianity, and what are connected inseparably with holy conduct and character. Such was the preaching of Christ Jesus, and the multitude was astonished at his doctrine. Such, too, was the preaching of the apostles, who were early charged with filling Jerusalem with their doctrine. Accordingly, the primitive disciples were firmly indoctrinated in respect to the vital truths of the cross; for they are represented, even in the early stages of their Christian course, as continuing steadfast in the apostles' doctrine. The Roman Christians learned the apostolic form of doctrine, and obeyed it from the heart; while they were earnestly exhorted to mark those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and avoid them. "Thou hast fully known my doctrine," writes Paul to Timothy; and he entreats him, as he would be a successful minister, to take heed to the same thing; and charges Titus to be uncorrupt, grave, and sincere in doctrine. Peter was of the like spirit and practice; for he was not negligent to put Christians always in remem-

brance of these things, and that, too, though they might already know them, and be established in the present truth.

The true minister of this age fails not to follow examples and instructions so exceedingly appropriate. He holds up the truth of God, and sustains it by competent authority, and explains it by all necessary amplification and illustration. He sees this to be indispensable. Aware that "doctrines of devils" are still taught and cherished among men, he would forestall these lies with all possible diligence, and establish every mind in the truth of God. If there be gainsayers, he would, though prudently, yet mightily resist them, and, by the inculcation of all necessary truth, banish error from the minds and hearts of the people. Those doctrines which are melancholy and unwelcome he is careful not to omit, but to preach them fully and faithfully; for all Scripture is profitable for doctrine; and all Scripture doctrines are profitable, in one way or another, for the perfection of the man of God, and that he may be thoroughly furnished to every good work. "Indeed, these are the grand bases of all profitable instruction. The character of God, the character of men, the way of salvation by Christ, and the kindred doctrines involved by necessary connexion with these, are subjects which our hearers must be brought to understand, or they are taught *nothing* to any valuable purpose."—*Dr. Porter.*

VI.

"That we may present every man perfect."—Col. i, 28.

THE minister for the times preaches *practically*. In every sermon, whether doctrinal or otherwise, he aims at practical effect. *He would do good*. This is his "ruling passion"—his great purpose in preaching the gospel of Christ. He aims to preach so that the gospel shall have its legitimate effect. He would enlighten the eyes—make wise the simple—rejoice the heart. He would have the word, as a hammer, breaking the rock in pieces. Hearing—Faith—Salvation—this is the Scriptural chain which the good preacher forever labours to link with his preaching. He looks that the word of God be quick and powerful—sharper than a two-edged sword; piercing, even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit—of the joints and marrow. He looks that, under every sermon, souls should be begotten by the word of truth. He watches for the answer of Christ's prayer, that the people may be sanctified through the truth. He exerts himself for the "pricking of the heart," and for the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"

Such being the shining mark, from which he never removes his eye, the modifying influences thus exerted upon his preaching is obvious to every one. He preaches *practically*. The saving effect is not forgotten in the selection of the text, in the

arrangement of the sermon, in the character and extent of his meditations upon a given point, in his mode of reasoning and illustration, in the manner of application of his theme to the audience, or in the spirit and gesture which accompanies the whole performance. For this man to pronounce a merely learned and orthodox discourse in the shape of a sermon, would be deemed by him a lost effort ; and such a Sabbath would be registered, in his calendar, as a lost day. He has no time for such a mode of preaching. To others is left the service of merely pleasing the ear, and giving entertainment to the intellect. *He* must save a soul ere it perishes forever. He must feed some one hungering for the bread of life ;—encourage and refresh some pilgrim weary and fainting ;—bind up some heart broken and bleeding. He must plant a seed that shall germinate and grow, to yield an immortal harvest. He must preach a sermon which some forlorn traveller shall hear, and then go home to die. He must, possibly in the next sermon, announce to some spirit the last warning or consolation ere that spirit meets its God.

VII.

"Preach the word."—2 Tim. iv, 2.

THE minister for the times preaches *biblically*. In accordance with the motto of this paragraph, he preaches the WORD. He preaches the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, and preaches them after a Scriptural manner. If his sermon be topical, his point is a Scriptural one, and embraced in his text. If the point is to be substantiated more fully, the considerations adduced from the Scriptures will always hold the prominent place in the argument. If the point is to be illustrated rather than demonstrated, the Scriptures will be a capital source of illustration and embellishment. If, again, the point is to be treated as a basis of inferences, these will also be shown to be harmonious with the divine oracles.

Or, if the sermon be a textual discourse, its scope will be exhibited as consonant with the general tenor of the Scriptures. The several ideas or doctrines will be presented in the Scriptural order, and so as to bring out the genius of the text. They will severally be compared with other Scriptures, thereby evincing the harmony of inspiration; while such light as the Scriptures generally throw upon the whole text, or any of its parts, will be carefully collated and exhibited to the hearers.

Or, often leaving single texts or propositions, he

will dwell upon more extended portions of the Scriptures, following the track and spirit of the divine teaching, and aiming, by brief and judicious comment, to echo the exact mind of the Spirit as He moved the "holy men of old." Thus he will stand back, and permit God himself to speak; and the preacher's aim is, that the sermon be as if proceeding from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake.

Indeed, it will be a prominent study with this minister to detect, by Scripture itself, the most effectual modes of teaching and impressing the Scriptures. The various history, prophecies, discourses, instructions, parables, and epistles of the Bible, will be carefully examined, analyzed, and studied, with this important object fully in view. The humble and wise minister distrusts his own skill and genius, even in the matter of shaping and constructing his discourses. He would serve as a good steward of the manifold grace of God. Opening his lips, he would speak as the oracles of God. Ministering the word of life, he would do it as of the ability which God gives, that God may in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ. He seeks not to come with excellency of speech or of men's wisdom, declaring the testimony of God; but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power—by the effectual mode of preaching which the Spirit dictates and inspires.

VIII.

"All Scripture—is profitable."—2 Tim. iii, 16.

THE minister for the times preaches *variously*. This is as obvious as the truth of the preceding paragraph. Adopting the topical, the textual, and the expository forms of preaching and studying the Scriptures, with a special view to learn all appropriate ways and modes of illustrating and impressing sacred truth, his preaching will hardly fail of variety. Inclining to no one class of truths or doctrines to the neglect of others, but giving to all due prominence and proper attention, the diversified wants of the hearers will be generally supplied. The Bible is the world where the good minister breathes, sees, and contemplates;—where he travels, explores, discovers, and wonders;—where he beholds God and angels, and ponders man's eternal history;—where a strange array of mighty men, and sublime scenery, and astonishing events, and enchanting visions, pass before the eye;—where, as he listens, truth falls upon his ear by every appropriate manner of inculcation. Here he meets with "profound reasonings—short prudential, moral, and religious maxims—plain and pithy precepts—orations in form—poetry of every species, and every high degree of excellence—familiar letters—private journals—history, both general and biographical—together with most other approved

modes of communication.”—*Dr. Dwight*. Thus, the minister finds endless variety in the book of God, while all is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect—thoroughly furnished to all good works. Thus he learns, and from the highest possible authority, all various pertinent and successful modes of preaching the glorious gospel. Thus he becomes qualified for every necessary adaptation, whether in public or private teaching. His mind is rich, Scriptural, scripturally balanced, and fruitful. In his preaching he reflects the inspired subjects, forms, and costumes of holy instruction, warning, and consolation. He is a well-instructed scribe. He is a wise builder. He gives to each his portion in due season.

IX.

“*We use great plainness of speech.*”—2 Cor. iii, 12.

THE minister for the times preaches *simply*. In other words, he preaches artlessly and plainly. The design is to benefit and save all of every class, and of every grade of intellect and of education. He feels it to be entirely indispensable that he be understood. Hence, he preaches with simplicity. His plan of discourse is simple. Intricacy, and multiplicity of heads and divisions, are avoided.

His scheme has unity and definiteness. His arrangement is natural and orderly. The main point of the discourse, as well as the principal heads, are laid down with perspicuity, and with as much brevity as possible. Then the style of the whole performance is simple, though always dignified and chaste, and never descending to any vulgar or mean expression or word. His terms are popular, rather than scientific or technical. Every word is as sound and good as it is simple and plain. His sentences are idiomatic and easy—not long and involved, and are understood as soon as uttered. He uses no superabundance of words and expressions; but announces his thoughts plainly and directly, and there ceases. If imagery be employed, it is always with due moderation and caution, and with a preference for that drawn from the “lively oracles.” His elocution, too, corresponds to the simplicity of his style. As much as possible he avoids all mannerisms. He speaks distinctly, properly, and naturally;—not as a man acting a part, or performing a piece of mere professional service, but as one who greatly desires to be understood by every hearer, and who is solicitous to impart as well the impressions and emotions of his soul, as the ideas of his intellect. With such a speaker, all modes and ways will be avoided whose influence is to divert attention from the appropriate impression and purpose of the sermon. The whole arrangement, style, elocution, and gesture, are such as to be forgotten by the audience; while the thoughts, the

soul, of the discourse fasten all eyes, and arrest all hearts.

The preacher is simple. In his eye, externals are trifling—the *Word*, everything. That Word, therefore, he preaches with the simplicity of the primitive preaching. However profound as a reasoner, and mighty as a preacher, he prefers to speak five words with his understanding, that he might teach others also, than ten thousand words either in an unknown tongue, or in a style and manner not more easily understood.

X.

“*That they may be saved.*”—1 Cor. x, 33.

THE minister for the times preaches *definitely*. It has already been written that there is a lofty and mighty purpose in this man’s mind, which actuates him by night and by day; and this purpose is especially living and breathing in connexion with his preaching. He preaches with the purpose firmly in his mind to bring all that audience to the feet of Christ. This is his well-defined object, and nothing less than this. Here is the point toward which the theme—the plan—the sentences—the words—the imagery—the argument—the illustration—the elocution—the gesture—the *sermon*—the preacher’s mind and heart—all are directed, as the needle to the pole. He will “save some”—he will save all,

if possible, and will save all in that hour. That hour—that occasion, is one whose importance eternity alone can measure. It is, perhaps, the last with some hearer—he knows not whom. He must gather them all while he may, and now is the accepted time. This being his point, his mind and thoughts are steady. What is appropriate to his purpose he seizes, and omits the rest. The simplicity—the plainness already described, is spontaneous. All disposition to wander—all mere blandishments, whether of learning or of wit, are sacrificed. His eye looks right on, and he would draw every other eye in a single direction. In those hours in which he is preaching Christ to sinners—calling upon the lost, and proclaiming the great and eternal refuge—then, if ever, he seeks, and earnestly longs, for the profit of many, that they may be saved. Then, if ever, he would strike precisely. Then, if ever, he reaches after the wisdom that “winneth souls.” Then his soul is in perfect sympathy with His who came into the world to save sinners. Then he is always reminded to present *every one* perfect in Christ Jesus.

XI.

“—*His ministers a flaming fire.*”—Psa. civ, 4.

THE minister for the times preaches *feelingly*. The great truths of the gospel have possession not only of his understanding, but of his affections also. His heart is touched, and graciously moved, by what God has spoken. He has not merely speculated upon God and Christ—upon depravity and redemption—upon pardon and holiness—upon a judgment to come and eternal retribution. He has felt, also, and with profound feeling. He carries this deep feeling into the pulpit. His soul is baptized with the spirit of his theme. All his heart, all his powers, are enlisted. He kindles and glows with the enrapturing themes of gospel grace. Preaching faith to the inquirer and the doubting, his preaching is poured forth from a heart actively exercised with the joys of trust, and triumphing in the Lord of life. Announcing the remission of sins, he freely proffers to others what he feels that he has freely received. Expatiating upon all the pious and moral duties of the Christian, he exhibits it as an object most dear to his heart, that all Christians should adorn their profession by a beautiful life and conversation. Dilating upon the prospects of the righteous, he evinces that he habitually walks and converses with the sublime future—dwelling as in eternity; and feels within himself the earnest of

the heavenly inheritance. The unregenerate he persuades to repentance and salvation, with a deep feeling of "the terrors of the Lord." His view of the world is the Bible view. He contemplates but two great classes. He anticipates the awful judgment scene, and the final and unalterable destinies. He sees no hope for finally impenitent men, and preaches accordingly. Beholding the city of unrighteousness, he weeps over it. As far as in his power, he enters into the estimate of the soul's value, and realizes that for its loss there can be no possible compensation or alleviation. Hence, with the deepest emotion, he urges the sinner to escape, and make no tarrying, lest he be consumed. He most affectingly invites him to the great refuge—the all-sufficient Saviour of lost men—and joyfully bids all to come and receive the promised salvation. His is a feeling as well as instructive sermon. The thoughtful hearer listens, and, retiring, his heart struggles and weeps. He cares not to look to the right hand or to the left, but walks silently, while the external world is forgotten. The affecting words of the preacher have sunk deeply into his soul. He is filled with solemnity. His enkindled spirit seizes upon high resolves, and from that day he is a better man.

XII.

"Showing—gravity—sound speech."—Titus ii, 7-8.

THE minister for the times preaches *seriously*. Preaching the gospel of Christ is, in every aspect of it, the most serious of all earthly transactions. That work whose object is nothing less than that men may not perish, but have everlasting life—that work which is the divinely designated means for this sublime result,—must assuredly, in gravity and importance, hold the highest rank among the doings of mortals. And he who performs this work as he should, makes serious preparation in his study ; and, opening his lips, he speaks seriously. His whole heart is sober—his whole message is weighty—his whole manner is grave. He would realize that his business in the pulpit is as serious as the salvation of men. He forgets not that, failing more or less in his preaching, the most disastrous consequences may very probably result, and his mind anticipates the account he shall one day render of himself to God. His subjects, then, are all serious, and so is his manner of discussing them. Careless words and expressions, quaint illustrations, and all "lightness in his speech," are avoided. His voice and action are far removed from everything like vanity or display. He preaches

"As though he ne'er shall preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

Such was all the preaching and discoursing of the inspired preachers. All the Scripture examples are solemn and weighty ; nor does there occur to the writer's mind a solitary note of a different character in whatever Christ or his apostles spoke or wrote.

XIII.

"Great is my boldness of speech."—2 Cor. vii, 4.

THE minister for the times preaches *boldly*. We have seen that he fears not man. It is true, he has great respect for the congregation ; yet the same considerations, in part, that inspire his respect, dispose him, also, to boldness in dispensing the gospel of Christ. He respects men as human, intelligent beings—as those for whom Christ died—who are passing swiftly to the spirit world—who are shortly to commence an eternity of unspeakable happiness or wretchedness. Yet these are thoughts to inspire boldness in the gospel preacher ; while the love he bears to Christ, and to the honour of God, and to the souls of men—the longings of his heart for salvation, forbid him to fear. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is upon the heart of the true minister ; and that powerful influence, above everything else, animates his preaching with holy boldness and assurance. He believes, and therefore speaks. All worldly considerations and influences have little regard from him. He is a man of

God ; and the will of God, and the things of God, engross all his mind and heart. He looks not at visible, but at invisible objects. He dwells above those considerations that are wont to generate the fear of man. He loves the praise of God more than the praise of men, and therefore boldly announces what God has revealed. Although aware that, in preaching the truth of God, some will be offended ; yet he also knows that such preaching is necessary to the awakening and salvation of these same persons. At the same time, he considers those examples of preaching which were faultless. He ponders the boldness of Christ and his forerunner, as they preached to the rebellious Jews ;—the example of Paul, who spake boldly in the name of Jesus, and besought from the Ephesians incessant prayer in his behalf, that he might speak boldly, as he ought to speak. He considers the boldness of Peter, and John, and Stephen, as they charged upon the Jewish rulers the murder of the Messiah. Finally, he discerns how essential this quality of preaching is deemed in all the Scriptures ; and that the servants of God, from ancient times, were required not to be dismayed at the faces of men, lest they be confounded.

XIV.

“—*Speak my word faithfully.*”—Jer. xxiii, 28.

THE minister for the times preaches *faithfully*. To this the *boldness* of the last paragraph is essential. Faithful in his investigations of the Holy Scriptures, and in ascertaining what God has spoken to men, he is equally conscientious and faithful in declaring the truth to the congregation. He rightly divides the word of truth, giving to each his portion in due season. In his conversation and acquaintance with the people, he discerns what may be needful, and brings it forth from the divine word regardless of fear or favour. No offence, if possible, will be given, whether in the matter or manner of his preaching; but he will not be false to his trust to save his life. He will preach the word—being instant in season, out of season; reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all faithfulness. With Jeremiah, he girds up his loins and speaks to the people all that God commands, “diminishing not a word.” With Ezekiel, he speaks all that God tells him, whether men will hear or forbear. With Timothy, he will study to show himself approved unto God. With Paul, he keeps back nothing that is profitable: “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. * * * Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space

of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

The true minister would be able to say, at the conclusion of every sermon, "I have done all that I could rationally do. I sought out a discourse acceptable to God, and useful to the people. I preached with all possible ability of mind, and all possible fervour of soul, and all possible purity of motive; and I have done my utmost to breathe a saving influence over all the congregation."

XV.

"—In fear, and in much trembling."—1 Cor. ii, 3.

THE minister for the times preaches *cautiously*. He is as cautious, as thoughtful, as careful, as he is bold and faithful. Having meditated deeply upon the laws of human influence, he remembers that the result of a single sermon—nay, even of a single expression of a sermon—may be momentous and eternal. Its influence, under God, may be to save a soul from death, and to hide a multitude of sins. It has been known that, to a youth long dispirited and without hope, a certain sermon came as a healing balm to his fainting spirit, and he arose from that hour, and shone a star of the first magnitude; and his voice, during these two hundred years, has been instructing thousands and millions of the race.

A young man, twenty-seven years of age, once preached a sermon in Scotland, under the influence of which about five hundred persons were changed; while through these, doubtless, thousands more became savingly influenced.*

On the other hand, a sermon, or a single expression of a sermon, or some peculiar manner of its delivery, may result in consequences forever disastrous. It may present some false view. It may exert an influence to harden, rather than to win and subdue. It may prove untempered mortar. It may lure to peace, when there is no peace. It may be the starting-point whence an inquiring soul shall decline and wander till he stumbles into ruin. An influence for good, or for evil—for eternal good, or eternal evil, is liable to spring forth from a single discourse, and that according as its matter, its manner, and spirit may be. Amazing thought! And what will be the caution—the carefulness pervading the preacher in such circumstances! Surely he will meditate circumspectly, and will preach thoughtfully. Like Luther, he will never ascend the pulpit without trembling. He will not be in haste to speak. His words will be deliberate, mature, and acceptable;—his thoughts, all weighty and evangelical;—his spirit, all prayerful and holy;—his manner, all chaste, simple, sincere, and pure. He will forever guard against every prejudicial result;—he will labour that every discourse, and

* See Prof. Park's admirable Introductory Essay to his "Preacher and Pastor."

every word, shall give the upward and blessed influence. He will, if possible, be a savour of life unto life.

XVI.

"Rightly dividing."—2 Tim. ii, 15.

THE minister for the times preaches *discriminatingly*. Of course he will always recognize, in his preaching, the two great classes of hearers; namely, the regenerate and the unregenerate. The broad line of distinction between these will always be held forth most clearly and distinctly; yet in each of these he will discern more or less varieties of view, taste, ability, acquirements, temperament, and disposition, and will address himself to the work of meeting, so far as possible, every class, and every individual case before him. Many slumberers will need the awakening terrors of God's law. Many, in their self-righteousness, will need to have portrayed to them the "exceeding breadth" of the commandment. Many, in their inordinate love of the world, require to have presented, in vivid colours, to their eye this world's exceeding vanity. Many more, amid the influence of heartless skepticism, must be made to see that religion, pure and undefiled, is divine in its origin, and heavenly in its character, and completely salutary in its fruits. Many hard hearts must be subdued, melted, and made penitent by the proclamation of God's abound-

ing goodness. The inquirer especially must be most carefully guided; and the preaching he hears must be such as to lead him nowhere else but to Him who has said, "Come unto me." The babe in Christ must be fed with milk rather than with strong meat, which, as yet, he is not able to bear. The child of God, in the fire of affliction and trial, must be met with the heavenly consolations. He that is bowed down must be lifted up—the feeble-minded one must be comforted—the wavering must be confirmed—the wanderer restored—the faithful encouraged—the tempted assisted—the ignorant instructed—and the whole company of saints is to be led on through every varied difficulty, and by strong and certain progress, toward the heavenly Canaan. Hence, the good minister dwells amid the treasure-house, bringing thence things new and old. He feeds the people with knowledge. He becomes all things to all, and labours to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

XVII.

"They were not able to resist."—Acts vi, 10.

THE minister for the times preaches *ably*. That is, he presents in strong and vivid light the important subjects of his preaching. It is not meant that he necessarily be what is denominated a *great preacher*;—in other words, a preacher towering above

most in the strength of intellect, in the power of logic, and in the compass of learning which he brings to bear upon the themes of his discourses. But the minister I am describing understands his subject. He has studied and digested it well. His views are clear and definite. His argumentation, though often brief, is yet strong and conclusive. His descriptions are comprehensive and fair. He illustrates pertinently, and with neither too much nor too little diffusiveness. The arrangement of his thoughts is just and natural. His style is divested of all unnecessary words and every needless digression, and is direct and strong. In a word, he presents his subject with ability, and applies it judiciously. The sermon is not the production of a novice, but of a workman that has no need to be ashamed. He is an able minister of the New Testament. He is a strong preacher. He preaches with a definite purpose, from which he removes not his eye. He touches nothing that will not help him to accomplish his design, and advances directly, earnestly, and boldly. He presents a clear and Scriptural exhibition. He makes out a strong case. As he speaks, his step is firm—his movement, regular—his end, truth and conviction; and the end is generally attained. The preaching is in demonstration of the Spirit. He "mightily convinces." The hearers feel that an able hand has been laid upon them; and whether disposed to obey the truth or not, they readily acknowledge that he who has dispensed it needs not to be ashamed.

XVIII.

"Speaking the truth in love."—Eph. iv, 15.

THE minister for the times preaches *in love*. We have, in a former paragraph, noticed the affectionateness of his general character ; and under no circumstances is this feature more manifest than when he preaches the gospel. Deeply is his soul baptized with the spirit of love to the souls of men ; and while he preaches the truth, and preaches *all* the truth—while he is faithful as one that must give account, love is ever a prominent aspect of his discourse. It looks out through his candid and solemn eye. It sits upon every line of his countenance. It sounds forth in the intonations and music of his voice. It speaks in the evangelical style of his speech. It acts in the propriety of his gesture. It sparkles in the animated argument, and glows in every fervid exhortation, with which he persuades men to holiness and heaven.

How can this be otherwise ? This minister is a saved man, and loves his neighbour as himself. A company of deathless spirits are before him, each one of whom will be saved or lost forever. He comes to them an "ambassador for Christ." He stands up before the congregation to put in operation the very agency which Christ has designed for the salvation of the lost. With all his heart he would do the utmost good, and would omit no word,

nor any effort, that might help to accomplish the great result. He proclaims the love of God to man. He speaks of boundless mercy—of the grace of Him who “so loved the world.” He tells of a love that was stronger than death—a love that bled for the rebellious—a love that is infinite, and reaches for the eternal rescue of sinful spirits, and opens a world of glory and happiness to a race that, but for this love, had perished forever. Speaking, his soul enkindles with the divine flame. He warms and flashes with the spirit of the gospel he dispenses. A child of God, and the love of God filling all his soul, and the hope of glory pervading and ravishing his heart, the message which he brings to his fellow-men goes forth bathed in more than human tenderness and affection. Hanging over the sinner with the solemn warnings of revelation, there is no harshness—no impatience—no hoarse thunders. It is, rather, with the subdued accents of benevolence and love, uttered from the fulness of the soul, and wont to be accompanied “with tears.”

XIX.

“*Full of faith.*”—Acts vi, 5.

THE minister for the times preaches *believingly*. He firmly believes gospel preaching to be the heaven-appointed means for saving men. He believes this means to be rarely, if ever, used as it should

be without success, either in one form or another. He doubts not that Christ is with the faithful minister always; and in the great work of preaching, is with him specially. He preaches in full expectation. He remembers that the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. He is comforted and cheered with the idea that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of men; and that, while Paul may plant and Apollos water, it is God who gives the increase. He forgets not that he is preaching the identical gospel that, in many generations, has been the power of God unto salvation to every believer. He has no trust whatever in any effort unaccompanied with the Spirit's influence; but for that influence he accustoms himself to look in blessed expectation. "I am with you," is the pledge he receives; and going forth weeping, bearing precious seed, he doubts not of returning again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. He believes God, and believing, he preaches; and preaching, he believes. He deems it a settled question that the gospel of Christ, preached piously and faithfully, will never be in vain. It is a word that shall not return void; but shall accomplish, either directly or indirectly, that whereto it is sent. All the result, and all the manner of it, he leaves to God. In this matter, as well as in his general character, he walks by faith, and not by sight. He is not too regardful of external circumstances and visible appearances; and if, at times, all outward prosperity and progress may

seem to be stayed, and the world and Satan appear to bear almost universal sway—though all without may look inauspicious and hostile, yet, amid every discouraging aspect, he still preaches believingly. He indulges no doubt of a blessed invisible working, and, with unwearied diligence and confidence, he casts his bread upon the waters.

XX.

“*With joyful lips.*”—Psa. lxiii, 5.

THE minister for the times preaches *joyously*. Behold in the pulpit a true minister of the Lord Jesus. He is there to glorify Christ in the full and faithful exhibition of his gospel. By that blessed gospel he is himself saved and renewed—is a child and heir of God, and a candidate for heavenly happiness. He is perpetually astonished at the mercy of God to himself personally. He is enraptured in view of the provisions of Christ for sinners lost. The scales have fallen from his eyes, and he contemplates more fully than many the mystery of the love of God. Hence, his wonder, love, humility, and joy are greater. Standing there, the Spirit's influences are upon him, animating, invigorating, and blessing him. In his believing vision, Christ is present to approve, to impress, and save. The theme on which he expatiates absorbs his being. His heart is full, and out of its abundance the mouth

speaks. His lips are glad, and his preaching is the music of salvation. The joy with which he utters the message of mercy to sinful men, is kindred to the joy of those immortals who, far up over the plains of Bethlehem, once chanted to the wondering shepherds the song of glory, peace, and love. His "speech and preaching" are not of trifling matters. Their constant drift is heavenward, and they kindle as they run. His words, coming, as they do, from the spiritual and rejoicing soul of the preacher, flow forth to act with energy upon the hearers' hearts. When the minister is clothed with salvation, the saint sings aloud for joy; while the sinner, falling down, confesses that God is in him of a truth.

XXI.

"*An eloquent man.*"—Acts xviii, 24.

THE minister for the times preaches *eloquently*. His subject is eloquent, for it belongs to that class of themes the most important in the universe to man. His argument and discussion are eloquent, for they are such as most clearly and powerfully to exhibit the theme. The style is eloquent, for it has all the plainness, simplicity, vivacity, purity, and boldness which enter into an eloquent diction. His object is eloquent, for he would save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. His thoughts and views are eloquent, for his mind

reaches to glorify God rather than to please men. His hopes and expectations are eloquent, for he looks that eternal good will result from his sermon. His affections are eloquent, for his soul burns with perfect love to God and man. His whole spirit is eloquent, for it is pervaded and glowing with the sublimity of his theme. His gesture is eloquent, for it is the precise action that naturally and spontaneously arises from his subject—his feeling—his end. His message comes down upon the congregation with almost irresistible conviction and power. With Apollos, he is an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. With Stephen, he is full of the Holy Ghost, and men are not able to resist the spirit and wisdom with which he speaks. He preaches like Peter, when thousands were pricked to the heart. He preaches like Paul, when he declares of himself that his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

XXII.

“*Christ—in all.*”—Col. iii, 11.

THE minister for the times preaches *evangelically*. Such preaching is well defined by a living writer as that “which presents Christ in everything, and everything in Christ.” The good preacher preaches after a gospel manner. While he aims to exhibit all important truth, he is careful not to present the

truths of the gospel as insulated or apart from their real relations and affinities. He is not a mere preacher of the truth, but of Christian, gospel truth. He everywhere holds forth the connexion between the themes of revelation, and Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. He recognizes all genuine doctrines of piety and morality as emanating from the Light in whom is no darkness at all. He contemplates Christ as the great centre of revelation; and the cross, the grand exponent of Jehovah's written mysteries. He, therefore, separates Christ, and him crucified, from no part of his preaching. In the great field of the Bible, he finds Christ "in the beginning." He hears of Him in the fall, and discerns Him everywhere, to the final closing up of God's revealings to man. He was the bow of promise amid the gathered gloom of Eden. He was the "excellence" of Abel's offering. Enoch, Noah, and Abraham saw Him, though "afar off." Jacob, with his dying breath, announced His coming. Moses preferred even His reproaches to great riches. Job saw his Redeemer. David sung of Him. Every prophetic finger designated Him. Every ancient victim foreshadowed Him. Every apostolic voice proclaimed Him "all, and in all,"—the Alpha and Omega,—the beginning and ending,—the first and the last. So is He recognized in the preaching for these times. In such preaching, the doctrines presented are all bathed with His heavenly spirit, and brilliant with His celestial glory, and perfumed with His holy savour, and sanc-

tioned by His high authority. In the preacher's lips they are, in a sense, Christ himself. So for Paul to live was Christ; and his preaching knew not anything save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. All the manner, too, as well as the matter, is, as it were, Christ himself; for the minister is an ambassador for Christ, as though God besought the people by him; and he prays them, in Christ's stead, to become reconciled to God. "Christ liveth in" the evangelical minister. He is formed within him the hope of glory. So also does he dwell in Christ, as the branch in the vine. He has His spirit—His mind—His nature and likeness; and hence, whatever he preaches—however varied may be his modes of discourse—from whatever portion of the Scriptures his theme be selected, he "cannot but speak" and preach Christ to the multitude. He is Christ's representative—Christ's image before men. He lives to Him who died for him and rose again. Christ is forever with him. Christ is the burden of his spirit and his song—the blessed atmosphere which he never ceases to inhale. All that flows from his lips has the divine quality—the heavenly colouring. He gives thanks to God continually, who always causes him to triumph in Christ, and makes manifest the savour of His knowledge by him in every place. For he is not as many which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity—but as of God, in the sight of God, speaks he in Christ.

XXIII.

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words."

Eccles. xii, 10.

THE minister for the times preaches *acceptably*. Must it not be so if, as we have seen, he echoes the inspired voices? And to be acceptable is, with him, a matter of serious moment. To be pleasing, so far as is consistent with faithfulness, he deems a most sacred obligation, in order that he may commend the gospel, and win souls for heaven. Hence, he avoids all low and mean expressions, and all vulgar and unbecoming illustrations. On the other hand, he eschews all bombast in style, and all ostentation in manner, and all eccentricity in matter. So, likewise, he refrains from all lightness, and all harshness of spirit; and every look, and tone, and act, such as are calculated to excite disgust or displeasure. His manner is modest, serious, respectful, dignified, and, in all respects, decorous. He preaches the truth with simplicity and ability. He labours, with the wise man, to "find out acceptable words,"—such as are pleasing, and easily understood. His voice and elocution he has cultivated, so as to be able to announce, with facility and beauty, the sentiments and feelings of his heart. He speaks not too loud, on the one hand, nor too low, on the other. He is heard with distinctness and pleasure in every part of the audience. His

words are fitly spoken, and are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. They attract the attention and gratify the taste—as well as instruct the mind and improve the heart. He never gives needless offence. Even those of different views with himself can take no umbrage at his manner of preaching; while, rather, the comely and welcome garb in which he clothes his thoughts, fails not to ensure for them a more respectful notice from dissenting minds. In his preaching he is cautious of extremes, that he may be a stumbling-block to as few as possible. The spirit of innocent accommodation is a prominent trait in his preaching. If he may, he will please all men in all things; not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Thus he is always acceptable. An open door is before him. The common people hear him gladly, while the more intellectual and elevated welcome the wisdom of his lips.

XXIV.

“*With the Holy Ghost.*”—1 Pet. i, 12.

THE minister for the times preaches *with the Holy Ghost*. Be it remembered that the Holy Ghost has called him to this very work—prompted him to secure, by every appropriate means, the requisite qualifications—has renewed and sanctified his heart

—dwells in him by constant and blessed inhabitation—and producing in him all pure and lovely fruits, has led him far amid the sublime walks of Scripture knowledge, and given him clear views, and definite and strong impressions, of the things of God—has enchanted his soul with the heavenly mysteries—has hidden the transient glory of this world from his mind and affections—has brought heaven near, and granted ravishing glimpses of unutterable things and of approaching glory—has helped him to see more clearly than most the worth of the soul, and begotten within him a love for the soul which floods may not drown. He is a man full of the Holy Ghost. In preaching, he preaches what the Holy Ghost teacheth, and with the spirit and manner which the Holy Ghost dictates and inspires. The Spirit has led him in the selection of his theme—assisted him in shaping and maturing it; and then, in the pulpit, mightily helps him in proclaiming and enforcing it. The power of the Holy Ghost, so to speak, passes, in the shape of the word, to the hearer's heart; so that the word itself is "spirit and life" to the minds of the multitude. It flows not forth as a mere human persuasion, but flies with divine authority;—it goes with a heavenly unction;—it comes to the door of the soul with unearthly knocking;—it is a hammer, and the hand that grasps it is almighty;—it is a voice sounding forth as from the depths of eternity;—it is that preaching which is, with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven;—it is that opera-

tion with which Jehovah himself works ;—it is the preaching of a man in whose ear speaks the Lord of glory, saying, “ I am with you always.”

XXV.

“ *Bringing his sheaves.*”—Psa. cxxvi, 6.

THE minister for the times preaches *successfully*. Certainly so, if God works with him ; and the exceeding great and precious promises render success a settled question with respect to every true minister of the Lord Jesus. A portion of his success—perhaps most of it—his eye of sense will not see. Often, as he labours, he must “ quietly wait.” He is a husbandman that hath long patience, and walks by faith, rather than by sight. He knows that success, in one or another lovely form, and visible or invisible, is certain. He extends the gospel net, and catches men. He turns the hearts of men to the Lord their God. He teaches transgressors the ways of God, and sinners are converted. He is a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people are added unto the Lord. He so speaks that multitudes, greater or less, believe. He preaches, and the Holy Ghost falls on them that hear the word. He is not weary in well doing—in preaching well—and he reaps in due season. He sows bountifully, and his harvest is correspondent. He receives his wages, and gathers fruit to

life eternal. He is always abounding in the work of the Lord, and his labour is not in vain in the Lord. He goes forth weeping ; but he sows, and the seed is precious, and he returns with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. His preaching is oftentimes denominated “foolishness ;” yet by just such foolishness it pleases God to save them that believe. He perseveringly takes heed to himself and to the doctrine, and thus saves himself and his hearers. Earthly fame may be missing, yet a “joy and crown” are his—even the dearly beloved and longed for, whom he has begotten in the gospel. He is a wise man, and he winneth souls. When death comes, he has fought a good fight ; and, rising to meet God, he sings with heavenly humility and praise, “Behold ! I, and the children thou hast given me.” The response, “Well done, good and faithful,” greets his glad ear ; and he takes his place among those who, on earth, turned many to righteousness, and shines, henceforth, as the stars, forever and ever.

the world. The first of these is the
fact that the world is not a
uniform whole. It is made up of
many different parts, each of which
has its own characteristics. The
second fact is that the world is
not a static entity. It is constantly
changing and evolving. The third
fact is that the world is not a
simple machine. It is a complex
system of many interacting parts.
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THE HISTORY OF THE

Part Fourth.

THE MINISTER FOR THE TIMES
AS A PASTOR.

THE MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR THE TIMES.

PART IV.

I.

"I will give you pastors."—Jer. iii, 15.

THE minister for the times is a *Pastor*. In other words, he "takes heed to the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made him an overseer." The preaching of the gospel is, indeed, the great means of converting and saving men; while yet the Scriptures plainly and strongly connect with this work—subsidiary to it—and, as it were, indispensable to its appropriate result,—what is termed, in distinction from preaching, pastoral efforts and labours. Preaching saves men; but it must be genuine preaching—enlightened, suitable, well-adapted preaching,—if this great object shall be fully accomplished; and such preaching ordinarily exists only in unison with pastoral watchfulness and wisdom. Hence it is that the pastoral ministry is an essential department of the sacred office; and hence, too, when there is deficiency in this department, the labours of the pulpit, though otherwise able and acceptable, are of comparatively little effect. Happy

for the Church and the world, were this great truth engraven upon the heart of every gospel minister upon earth! The idea is still far too prevalent, that a minister's great duty, for the most part, goes out in public preaching. An error this, as insidious and plausible, as it is unscriptural and fatal; and is the more prevalent, as it tallies so well with the worldliness and sloth which, we must fear, tinge too much the character of some who wait at the altar.

Preaching! What is preaching to a congregation? Is it the mere repetition of the general principles of Christianity—such as we quote from books, and gather in the cloister? Is it the mere doling out of theology and ethics? Is it the dissertation of a student—the babbling of a recluse? God forbid! This amounts not to *preaching*; and he who has exercised himself thus, and wondered at his barrenness, must, henceforth, wonder no more. He fails to preach—fails well-nigh as disastrously as he who mounts the pulpit without thought or arrangement, and pours out a mere broken and ghastly mass of declamation and vociferation. Thou wilt not *preach* to that congregation without preparation; and an essential part of a perfect preparation must be thy deep and familiar acquaintance with the religious circumstances of the people before thee.

The pastoral department supplies some of the essential elements of the effective and successful sermon. It imparts to the public preaching an in-

dispensable knowledge—breathes into it an indispensable spirit and warmth—inspires it with an indispensable sympathy—dictates an indispensable style—and points out the indispensable application. Mark if such be not the Scripture view of this most important subject. The good minister, for example, is to give to each a portion in due season. But how can he do this, except either by miracle, or by ascertaining, through pastoral diligence, what the exact “portion” is? Again, what is this “watching for souls as they that must give account?” Is such momentous watching fulfilled in a mere sermon begotten and reared up in solitude, and with no more adaptation to those particular “souls” than to any others whom the minister is not appointed to watch, and for whose salvation he is not so specially accountable? Yet again; what is this “taking heed to the flock,” which the apostle, in imagery so significant as well as beautiful, enjoins upon the ministers of Ephesus? Is all this poetry a mere “song,” or means he not, rather, that those elders were to exercise a constant, minute, and impartial care over their respective charges, correspondent to that of a “good shepherd?” Once more; what of the example of the apostle, who himself appears, for a time, to have acted the pastor at Ephesus? He teaches publicly, of course, “and from house to house;” and for three years ceases not to warn every one, night and day, with tears. How was this? Was all this effort in the shape of pulpit sermons? or was it not by public

discourses and by personal addresses combined—the two modes reciprocally and mightily aiding each the other? Went not these two apostolic influences hand in hand, just as previously, when daily, in the temple and in every house, Peter and John ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ? This is a plain matter. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. We may not mend the ways and works of God, nor be wise above what he has written. The apostolic minister of old was a pastor. The minister for these times is equally a pastor. No other is suitable. No other will, in general, be of great use. The age requires not mere hirelings—not those who, while they preach on Sabbaths, are yet remiss and neglectful at other seasons. The times demand of a minister that he “care for souls”—that he be instant at all seasons—that he spare no pains, whether in the pulpit or out of it—warning every man, and teaching every man, that he may present every one perfect in Christ Jesus.

II.

“*I know my sheep.*”—John x, 14.

THE minister for the times is an *intelligent* pastor. He knows his flock. He has a personal acquaintance with each one of them, and a knowledge of their places of residence. He forms an acquaint-

ance not only with the parents, but with the youth, the children, and the domestics ; and keeps a careful list of those who habitually attend upon his ministry. He acquaints himself, so far as may be, with the religious state of each person. The classification of his charge is duly made out. He knows who are joyful in God, and who are walking beneath clouds ;—who are strong, and who weak ;—who are faithful, and who remiss ;—who are progressing, and who retrograding, or apparently stationary ;—who are full grown, and who are babes ;—who are intelligent, and who are ignorant and need instruction ;—who are harassed by temptation—who are bowed down—who are erring, whether in theory or in practice—who are specially exposed to the wiles of the destroyer—and what minds are labouring under difficulties with one or more of their brethren, as well as what such difficulties are. He knows, also, who are serious or inquiring—who are despairing—who are careless and reckless—who are opposed—who are skeptical—and who are candid. He knows who are poor, and whether there is any special destitution, and what can be done in the way of alleviation. He knows who are sick, and the state and prospects of their sickness, and what efforts he should put forth for their benefit, whether in body or in soul. He is acquainted, further, with the financial condition of his charge—what has been done for its improvement, and what still remains to be done ; and, in general, the good minister knows all about his people that he ought

to know. "I know my sheep," saith the chief Pastor; and herein is He imitated, so far as possible, by all his subordinate and true shepherds.

III.

"From house to house."—Acts xx, 20.

THE minister for the times is a *circulating* pastor. He goes from house to house, like his apostolic exemplars. His study is not his home merely;—his home, rather, is everywhere within his parish or charge. He is in motion. He is here or there, in accordance with his regular system of visitation, or as special exigencies may require. Within the precincts of his charge, he is in "every house;"—not merely those convenient of access, but those, too, that are most remote. Nor yet, in his travels, will he confine himself always to those families and persons that wait on his ministry; but he will call upon any others to whom he may be useful. He will inquire out those who have no stated place of church attendance, and lead them, if he may, to the house of God. He goes out, in his pastoral circuits, into the highways and hedges, and compels them to come in, that the house of God may be filled.

Then, as he circulates, it is as a minister and pastor. He converses—inquires—instructs—encourages—and warns. Nor does he circulate merely for the purpose of personal intercourse. He in-

cludes neighbourhood preaching and lecturing, wherever it is practicable. He has his stated appointments between the Sabbaths in different points, and more or less remote from the place of public worship, in order that he may reach some who would not otherwise hear and be saved.

Thus the good minister is a moving man. He is out, gathering up the sheep scattered upon the mountains. He stays not at home to stagnate and faint. He is abroad in all directions. He goes everywhere, preaching the word. If these be perilous times, when false teachers abound, creeping into houses, leading captive the inmates into error and sin, then he who is the minister and pastor for the times will follow these men of corrupt minds, and withstand them, and make manifest their folly.

IV.

“—*Went over all—in order.*”—Acts xviii, 23.

THE minister for the times is a *systematic* pastor. While he goes abroad and circulates among his people, it is not at random, and wherever mere whim or inclination may lead him. He goes systematically about this great work. He adopts and pursues a regular plan of procedure. Going from house to house, he advances in an orderly progress—thus being certain of omitting none, and, so far as his pastoral ministry is concerned, being sure of

giving to each his portion in due season. Thus he passes regularly throughout his charge—forgetting not, at the same time, to give more than ordinary attention to the sick and dying, the anxious and the convert, as well as to other cases that require extraordinary attention. His system leads him to attend to all regularly, and to attend to all special cases specially. Then, as he proceeds, he keeps a careful register of his visits, and of whatever occurs in the course of his pastoral work that is important or remarkable. His system, unless prevented by peculiar circumstances, the good pastor prosecutes with constancy. He has his regular days of the week, and the set hours in those days, in which to go out on his pastoral excursions; while all his labours in this department of his ministry are reduced to as much system and regularity as are admissible. He aims that all things be done decently, and in order, and thus what he performs is done much more perfectly, and to better purpose; while, at the same time, a vastly greater amount of business is accomplished than if system and order were neglected. He is punctual to all his engagements. He does his work in its allotted time, and is ready to meet and fulfil each duty as its hour arrives.

V.

"Give thyself wholly."—1 Tim. iv, 15.

THE minister for the times is a *consecrated* pastor. His systematic movements greatly aid his diligence. When a minister has an established time for a given work, such an arrangement will, of itself, exert a positive tendency to activity for the punctual performance of such work. Hence, the systematic man, in any department of effort, is likely to be a diligent and active man. The good pastor is diligent in his work. His general character for industry, of which we have before written, is as apparent in his pastorate as in any other branch of his operations. He is diligent to ascertain what needs to be done. He studies actively all the wants of his flock; and, as the good shepherd that "careth for the sheep," he employs himself incessantly to provide what may be lacking, and whatever may be needed. To his momentous work as preacher and pastor, he devotes all his energies. He leaves not the word of God to serve any other interest, but gives himself wholly to prayer and the ministry of the word; and that, too, privately as well as publicly. He determines to know nothing else;—he continues in these things, and gives himself wholly to them. Every hour, and every moment, is felt to be precious with the man who lives to glorify God in the salvation of souls. Whatever

his hands find to do, he does it with his might. He is not slothful in business—he is fervent in spirit—serving the Lord. He gives all diligence, that he may make sure not only his own election, but that of his people. He works as a man that must give account; and as, in the great day, he will wish to have left no means untouched tending toward the salvation of men, so he duly exercises himself, with all diligence and fidelity, to bring every one to the obedience of Christ.

VI.

“*Be vigilant.*”—1 Pet. v, 8.

THE minister for the times is a *vigilant* pastor. We can conceive of a shepherd whose mind, for a little space, might be otherwise occupied than with the care of the flock beneath his charge;—that, while they might be grazing upon the hill-sides, or some of them wandering at a distance, the keeper might be asleep within some refreshing bower, or passing an hour away with some neighbouring shepherd in pleasant converse, or else reclining upon his crook, lost in some delicious revery, or waking his harp to strains of soul-subduing music. We can imagine how possible, meanwhile, that some beast of prey fall upon a distant, thoughtless lamb, and devour him, while yet the bloody work be undiscovered until too late; when that same lamb should have

escaped unharmed had he not, for the moment, been forgotten by his keeper.

Even so in the heavenly pastorship. Alas! how many a loved and promising one has been ensnared and overcome by the great devourer! O! how many a fond hope has faded forever, and rivers of tears have fallen upon the ruins of the "loved and lost!" Might some watchful shepherd's eye have followed these—some soft hand been laid upon them—some voice, authoritative and lovely, have whispered warning—some friendly finger pointed to a safer path—then the feet of many had not slid, but should have trod joyously along the way of immortality.

How watchful, then, is the good pastor! With what incessant care and longing yearns his soul over the people of his ministry! How often does he review each beloved name! and how eagerly and closely does he study the safety and welfare of all of those for whom, in a solemn sense, he must give account! "Watch and remember," is the apostolic charge breathing into his ear from morning to evening, and evermore. "Take heed to the flock," is the great injunction, from which he never removes his eye. He stands upon the walls that encompass the fold of the redeemed ones. His eye runs to and fro to detect the presence or the approach of any and every enemy. He watches the wants of the flock of Christ, and labours to bring the needed supply. He spies the danger, and sounds the needed alarm. Seeing the wolf coming,

he resists him, for he careth for the flock. He is ever engaged in fortifying the city of God. His watchful care is interested in whatever helps to advance the salvation of the people. His eye is out, watching, with interest profound, all the movements and workings of Providence. He is inquiring where God leads, and walks closely after the divine hand. When God speaks, his servant will not fail to reiterate the voice, and deepen, if he may, the sacred impression. When God is moving, whether near by, or abroad among the nations, this sentinel will be the first to listen to those chariot wheels, and sound the note of warning to the rebellious, or of consolation to the pious. He ponders deeply the awful voice of prophecy, and labours to lift up the minds of men to its momentous realizations. He is a watchman, and his responsibility is deep and solemn; and he hastens to be faithful, that no one's blood shall be required at his hands.

VII.

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage."—1 Pet. v, 3.

THE minister for the times is a *lowly* pastor. Though holding the important relation of *overseer* of the flock of Christ, and appointed to be one of the special rulers over the Church of God, he takes the oversight thereof in the absence of all pride—all pompous display of dignity or power—all ideas of

superiority over the members of Christ's kingdom. He remembers that a minister is the servant of the Church, and not the Church servants to himself; for even Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. How much more, then, should the subordinate pastor walk lowly before God, and as he goes in and out among his people. Honourable, it is true, greatly honourable, are his station and service. He waits upon the children of the Highest. He is a servant of the mysteries of redemption. He stands, in an affecting sense, instead of the Chief Shepherd; and, at His appearance, the reward of His faithful servant shall be great. Still, he is among the lowliest of men. All Christ's followers, of whatever tongue or fold, he counts to be better than himself. He "lords" it not;—he washes the saints' feet;—he gladly yields himself to any becoming service. He runs to wait upon the weakest one. The most insignificant are, in his eye, of sufficient consequence to command his utmost efforts for their welfare. He makes himself a servant to all, that he may gain the more. Every act of intercourse with the people of his charge bespeaks his lowliness. All his pastoral cautions and warnings—all his untiring diligence—every disciplinary act—all are marked with the same unassuming, unassuming, humble aspect. He glories not, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the great Shepherd of the sheep, he is meek and lowly in heart. The distinction which he covets is, that he may bring great

glory to the God he loves, and for whom he gladly suffers the loss of all things.

VIII.

“Keep sound wisdom and discretion.”—Prov. iii, 21.

THE minister for the times is a *discreet* pastor. Not only does he wish to do no harm, but he *studies* diligently, that he may in no way bring injury to any person, or to the heavenly cause that lies nearest to his heart. It is one of the subjects of his daily and earnest prayers to God that he may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, and adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. Discreet in whatever pertains to his person and spirit, he also guides with discretion his family affairs, so that all his domestic arrangements may be becoming, pure, and exemplary, and such as to promote godliness and order among the people. He moves discreetly in all his pastoral visitations, ever aiming to comport himself so as, at the same time, to honour Christ, and render the repetition of his visits and conversations desirable. Adapting himself, so far as proper and practicable, to the various classes under his watch-care, he commends himself to them as a judicious, friendly, as well as godly pastor. Passing hither and thither, he utters none of those words that “eat as doth a canker.” He forbears to participate in any conversation that tends to mis-

chief; while the promotion of peace, forbearance, charity, and piety, is the drift of all his communications. He lays aside contention ere it be meddled with. He hushes to peace every rising disturbance between families and neighbours, and quenches, if he may, the kindling flame.

IX.

“—*Understanding in all things.*”—2 Tim. ii, 7.

THE minister for the times is a *skilful* pastor. His ardent and quenchless love for the souls of men and for the glory of God, seems naturally to generate the skill and wisdom appropriate to the pastoral office. Thus, the true minister is skilful in all the departments of his work. He is skilful in the formation and execution of various benevolent plans for advancing the Redeemer's cause. He knows how to bring out into action the talents and gifts of his church-members, and to direct their energies to the promotion of religion. He is wise to prevent stagnation, and consequent backsliding, among those professing the name of Christ. He is skilful to win and encourage them to duty, and has studied carefully the means adapted to such an end. While, as before written, he is intelligent as to the individuals of his church and congregation, and acquainted with the diversities of their mental and religious condition; so also is he competent to meet each case

with the appropriate influences, and adapt himself to each varying exigency. He is not only disposed, but capable also, to become all things to all men for the accomplishment of the great purpose of his ministry. He possesses a capacity to meet error and refute it. He knows how to approach the indifferent, and those who are opposed, and weaken their opposition and blunt their prejudices. He knows how to bear himself so as never needlessly to provoke enmity or ill-will. He can give the soft answer that turneth away wrath. He can stop the mouth of the gainsayer. He can confirm the doubting—he can encourage the desponding. He is a wise builder—a skilful workman in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. While in labours more abundant, these labours are appropriate and holy, and at the same time well calculated to subserve the best interests of pure religion.

X.

“*With all long-suffering.*”—2 Tim. iv, 2.

THE minister for the times is a *long-suffering* pastor. The grace of forbearance and long-suffering is altogether indispensable to the good pastor in every age; and it is one of the secrets of his influence and success that he is “not soon angry.” He, in fact, makes up his mind to “endure all things.” His position is, in some respects, kindred to that of

Moses leading God's people along the wilderness. Like the congregation of old, the pastor finds various classes and descriptions among the people of his charge. There are Calebs and Joshuas—those that are valiant for the Lord; yet the proportion of these, as formerly, is too often painfully small; while numbers are fearful and distrustful, and some are murmurers and disturbers in Israel. In walking before such a people, how careful is the good and faithful minister of Jesus Christ! What self-possession, and self-control, and power of endurance, will he every day and everywhere evince! He believes, and therefore does not make haste. Unpleasant rumours reach his ears, while yet he possesses his soul in patience. Perhaps insulted and abused amid his faithfulness, he represses, at the moment, all anger and wrath, and answers not again. Using his strongest and best endeavours to benefit and please the people, and meeting, in return, their ingratitude and indifference, he submits his cause to Him that judgeth righteously, and murmurs not. And when his fairest, fondest hopes are sometimes blasted; and when the enemy comes in like a flood, and the beautiful vineyard seems, for a time, trodden down and laid waste; and when friends are few, and opposers and scoffers are multiplied,—the good pastor still endures, as seeing Him who is invisible. Being reviled, he blesses—being persecuted, he suffers it—being defamed, he entreats—submitting, if necessary, to be made as the filth and offscouring of all things.

XI.

"All things to all."—1 Cor. ix, 22.

THE minister for the times is an *accommodating* pastor. He has laid aside all haughtiness—all notions of independence such as would interfere with the welfare of his flock—all unyielding and eccentric roughness of character and manners. He, in a most important sense, lives for others rather than for himself. Selfishness is dispensed with, and he is laid upon the altar of sacrifice. He yields to everything innocent and proper for the good of his people. He respects even their prejudices and whims, and thinks it not beneath him or his office to meet even these with a spirit of accommodation. He will deny himself, rather than be a stumbling-block to them. If all things are lawful to him, yet, if they be inexpedient, he will forbear to indulge himself. If eating meat, under certain circumstances, will offend his brother, he will not thus eat while the world standeth, that he may avoid such offence. His business is not personal gratification, but to bring all possible to his Saviour's feet. It matters little with him what may be his present sufferings, if he may but compass the object dearer to his heart than all others in this world of sin. He endures all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. No sinless sacrifice is

too great in the eye of this pastor, if it may essentially aid the everlasting salvation of a soul. He will gladly close up the most attractive volume, and suspend the most interesting study, if such an interruption is for the spiritual benefit of the poorest, most neglected one. He accommodates himself to persons, whether they be Jews or Greeks—wise or unwise. He accommodates himself to conditions, and knows how to abound, and how to suffer need—how to be abased, and how to be honoured. He gives no offence, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving himself as the minister of God in all circumstances, and with all suitable qualifications.

XII.

“Reprove, rebuke, exhort.”—2 Tim. iv, 2.

THE minister for the times is a *disciplinary* pastor. Being placed as a ruler in the Church of God, he looks and labours that all beneath his charge walk worthy of their high vocation. He has studied thoroughly the Scriptural principles given for the regulation and government of a church, as well as the manner and spirit with which they are to be applied; and has sought diligently how he ought to behave himself in the house of God. We have seen that he lords it not over God's heritage. He is lowly, and meek, and long-suffering, and kind. As a ruler, he is no striker, but gentle toward all

men. He makes use of discipline, not for inflicting wounds in Christ's body, but for binding up such as may exist ;—not for the destruction of the erring, but for their recovery and salvation ;—not that what is lame may be turned out of the way, but rather that it may be healed. An overseer, he takes the oversight—not by constraint, or from sor-did motives, but with a willing and ready mind ; and rules not in haughtiness or severity, but rather by being an example to the flock. Forgetting all ideas of superiority or precedence, he labours that himself and people may, in spirit, all be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. With all the wisdom of a pious and intelligent father in his family, does he aim to take care of the Church of God. When discipline is needed, it is administered promptly, yet always with due regard to age, station, intelligence, and influence, and always with the Spirit of Christ. If “offences come,”—and come they will,—and moral and Christian character is forfeited, the good pastor moves mildly and prayerfully, but decidedly. The old leaven of wickedness must not be retained, lest the whole be leavened, and the world be scandalized ; and, hence, the “wicked person” is put away. Yet is he put away not without tears, entreaties, and prayers for his repentance and forgiveness.

At the same time, it is the good pastor's constant endeavour to forestall the necessity of extreme discipline. He is sober and vigilant, as well for his people as for himself, knowing that the adversary

is abroad, seeking whom he may devour. If here and there is one peculiarly exposed, or partially fallen or declining, he reproves, rebukes, exhorts, with all long-suffering and doctrine; while, so long as hope remains, he never relinquishes his labour to lead back the wanderer to the great Shepherd and Bishop.

XIII.

"Love thy neighbour as thyself."—Matt. xxii. 39.

THE minister for the times is a *benevolent* pastor. The spirit with which he moves among the people presents a strong contrast with that which actuates worldly men. He carries with him a heart overflowing with good-will toward every one he meets, and toward the world. His soul looks not upon men through eyes of party, of prejudice, or bigotry. Rather does he contemplate them as his fellows—bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh—inheriting a common character with himself, a common salvation made accessible, and a common eternity. His view of men seems kindred to that of Jesus. Their fall—their recovery—these are the aspects that fill his eye; so that slighter views and subordinate circumstances sink away from his vision. He loves men as men—loves them *because* they are men—because they are beings for whom Christ died, and who may participate in a glorious immortality.

It is with a spirit such as this that the good pastor goes from house to house—and smiles upon those he meets—and talks of heavenly things—and blesses the children—and comforts the mourner—and calls back the wanderer—and instructs the ignorant—and springs, with mighty impulse, to every good work. He is no hireling—no time-server—no speculator—no wolf. He is a heavenly flame;—he is Christ's representative;—he breathes perpetual good-will;—he goes about doing good;—he is searching for eternal happiness, not for himself only, but for the multitude; and rejoices at the welfare of another, as when a man finds great spoil.

XIV.

“*Be courteous.*”—1 Pet. iii, 8.

THE minister for the times is a *courteous* pastor. The benevolence of which we have just written is formed by the hand of cultivation into all beautiful and winning shapes. All his movements are as graceful as they are benevolent and kind. He eschews all awkwardness—all obtrusiveness—all indecent haste—all roughness of speech and manners. He wears an open, respectful, and gracious countenance. The law of kindness is ever upon his lips. He converses with equal dignity, simplicity, and propriety. He listens with careful attention when another speaks, and regards, with proper

attention, all that is said. His general appearance and habits are, if possible, such as to offend no one ; but rather what are calculated to ensure the approbation, and attract the respect and affections of his people and of the public. He is, in all respects and in all circumstances, a true Christian gentleman. Nor does he for once lay aside this character in whatever duty or exigency of his pastorate. Does he instruct ? It is not with haughtiness, and so as to convey to those instructed a painful sense of their inferiority. Does he reprove ? It is not with the scorpion's sting, but with the lip of kindness, such as wins back the erring to the paths of righteousness. Must he inflict sorrow ? It is always with reluctance, and with an unwavering eye to the good of the sufferer. Does he "warn every one ?" It is not with the countenance and tones of a task-master, but with the gentleness of the lamb. Does he enter one and another house ? All his conduct there, to the last word he utters as he gives his blessing at departing, bespeaks him a well-bred man. Do others enter his own doors ? His smiling countenance—his unfeigned pleasure and good-will—his hearty welcome—his kind attentions—his gentlemanly bearing and polished manners—all evince the genuine scholar in the lovely and heavenly principles of religion undefiled. Thus is marked all his intercourse and movements. Even as Paul, by his inoffensive and beautiful conduct, he "pleases all men in all things," if that be possible ;—not seeking therein his own profit, but

the profit of many, that they may be saved. And, withal, this, as already hinted, accords entirely with the genius of pure Christianity. A true Christian, whether minister or layman, is "the highest style of man." He foreshadows, in his general conduct, the gracefulness, the loveliness of that world into which nothing enters that offends.

XV.

"*Weep with them that weep.*"—Rom. xii, 15.

THE minister for the times is a *sympathizing* pastor. He identifies himself with the interests of his people. They are to him as a single family, of which he is the approved religious teacher, counsellor, brother, and friend. In all their afflictions he is afflicted. For the purity, comfort, and prosperity of each member, he is profoundly interested. With unutterable concern he follows the inquirer—enters into his case—gives him the needed directions—and comes with him to the feet of Jesus. He perfectly sympathizes with the convert—appreciates his trials and doubtings—rejoices in his joy—and cherishes him as a nurse cherisheth her children. In all the sorrows of his people he participates. He passes by the house of feasting that he may linger with the mourner, and help to bear his burden, and afford the appropriate consolation. He remembers the aged and feeble—often goes where

they are—sits down at their side—is touched, in his degree, with “the feeling of their infirmities”—cheers, with his Christian smiles and friendship, life’s sombre evening—and labours to kindle anew the sweet hope of a better and more enduring substance. If called to admonish, it is out of much affliction and anguish of heart, and with “many tears.” Remembering the pit whence himself was digged, and the frailties of fallen humanity, he always mingles kindness with severity; and when real penitence is evinced, he is, at once, ready to forgive and comfort, lest the erring one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. The sick are special objects of his tender sympathy and most watchful attention. He visits them constantly, cautiously, yet with earnest zeal and prayer, making use of every appropriate means to benefit and save the soul, while he sympathizes with the sufferings of the body. And, in general, whether of spiritual or bodily frailty, who is weak, and he is not weak? Who is offended, and he burns not?

XVI.

“*Distributing to the necessity of saints.*”—Rom. xii, 13.

THE minister for the times is a *charitable* pastor. He is forward to remember the poor; and his heart and his hand are always open, according to his ability, to aid in supplying their wants. He is

acquainted with every real object of charity within his charge; and while, from his own resources, he does what he can for their assistance, he is also diligent to interest others in their behalf. The poor and destitute are, indeed, the objects of his special care. He forgets not that such was the spirit and practice of Christ himself. He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. He was sent to heal the broken-hearted—to preach deliverance to the captives—and recovering of sight to the blind—and to set at liberty them that were bruised. He remembers that the great scheme of salvation itself was but the outbeaming of infinite charity;—that He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. “Freely ye have received, freely give,” is the proclamation breathing forth from the glorious gospel; while therein prospects the most blissful are constantly held forth, inviting the minister and every Christian to faithfulness in this respect. The merciful are to obtain mercy. He who is considerate of the poor is to be delivered in time of trouble, and his righteousness is to endure forever. He lends to the Lord, who is to pay him again. His light is to break forth as the morning—the glory of the Lord is to be his rearward. He is to call, and the Lord will answer. His darkness is to be as noonday, and the Lord is to guide him continually—making him as a watered garden—as a spring of water, failing not; and at last he is to be welcomed to the heavenly inheritance, his deeds of

charitable goodness being received as done to the Lord himself.

Of Fletcher of Madely, it is recorded that he was never happier than when he had given away the last penny in his house. Over a handful of silver which he was wont to take with him when going abroad to visit the sick, he rejoiced as a miser over bags of newly discovered treasure. Such is the character of the genuine pastor—the true shepherd of the flock of Christ.

XVII.

“—*Nothing by partiality.*”—1 Tim. v, 21.

THE minister for the times is an *impartial* pastor. So many hints have already fallen illustrative of this feature of the good pastor, that but few special remarks will be necessary. The whole spirit of the gospel is strictly impartial. God so loved *the world*. For the “whole world”—“for all”—“for every man”—the Saviour died. Whosoever believeth—whosoever will—all that labour—him that cometh—shall be saved. God wills that not any shall perish—that all shall repent. The same spirit of impartiality was enjoined upon the apostles and primitive disciples. They were to preach to every creature—they were to warn every man, and teach every man, in order to present every one perfect in Christ Jesus. With special solemnity were they

charged to observe the various duties of the ministry without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. For while the wisdom that is from above is pure, peaceable, and gentle, merciful and fruitful it is also, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Such is the wisdom suited to the minister and pastor in every age. He is greatly careful on the point in question. If he is attentive to the rich—the refined—the learned—the honourable, he is equally attentive to the poor—the ignorant—and the obscure. All are the objects of his most affectionate regard—all live in his prayers—all are met by his pious counsels and influence, luring them all, if possible, to life eternal.

XVIII.

“Follow—peace—”—2 Tim. ii, 22.

THE minister for the times is a *peaceable* pastor. It is one of the constant studies of the pastor we describe that he may pursue and promote peace among his own people, and, so far as his influence extends, in the whole catholic Church. He watches the first risings of strife, and hastens to allay it. He exhorts to peace with earnest entreaties. Himself following peace with all men, so he persuades all to be at peace among themselves. He expects no good to dwell where there is contention, but rather that all things will wax worse and worse.

Hence, he aims to bring Christians to be kindly affectioned one toward another, and, if it be possible, to live peaceably with all men ;—with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. God having called Christians to peace, the good pastor labours that his people do all things without murmurings and disputings, in order that they may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they are to shine as lights in the world. Peace within, and with all men, is one of the lovely fruits of the Spirit, and one of the fair attributes of that wisdom which cometh from above. Peace, then, is a prominent point with the wise and holy minister of the Lord Jesus. He speaks, and acts, and prays for the peace of Jerusalem. He will suffer large personal inconveniences and wrongs, rather than allow any unholy disturbances to be awakened or sustained. He will refrain from all religious controversy, so long as he may do so conscientiously ; and when duty may call him to contend, he will do it with the spirit of Christian peace and love—warring only against error and sin—striving only for the truth—and labouring with his might to lead all to rest firmly and safely upon the great foundation of peace and love.

XIX.

"Comfort ye my people."—Isa. xli, 1.

THE minister for the times is a *comforting* pastor. He is himself comforted. He has known, in one form or another, what severe affliction is. The Lord has tried him as in the fires. Perhaps it is true of him at the present time that he dies daily. He may be bearing about with him continually the dying of the Lord Jesus. No marvel if he be a living martyr. He dwells, it may be, in the furnace; and all this, not merely for his own purification and salvation, but that he may be the more perfectly qualified to sympathize with the sorrows of others, and to point them to the great Source of consolation. He is not a mere theoretical helper and guide, but he is one of deep and solemn experience. He has passed into the cloud. His breast has been bared to the awful storm. Wave following wave has gone over him. He has tasted and drunk to the dregs some of the bitterest of earth's bitter cups. He has looked up and wished to die, and be no more seen; and when the aching, fainting head was just sinking beneath the cold, dark waters, it found a resting-place upon the arm of Jesus, whose grace proved sufficient for him. Above the tempest arose a voice, saying, "It is I, fear not!" Henceforth he leaned upon the Strong, and smiled amid his tears; and there was healing with

his wounding, and praise was blended with sighs, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost was there, and in his daily song he blesses God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth him in all his tribulation, that he may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith he himself is comforted of God. For, as the sufferings of Christ abound in him, so his consolation also aboundeth by Christ; and whether he be afflicted or comforted, it is for the consolation and salvation of the souls of men.

With these sublime views, the good minister and pastor takes joyfully the spoiling of his earthly prospects and happiness. It is a part of the ministerial discipline. It is one of the deep lessons of his professional education. It is a process probably indispensable to the perfection of his ministry. It is a vast price paid for a shining qualification, without which the minister would be ever defective. It is the loss of all things, that all may be gained. It is the enduring of all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Jesus Christ with eternal glory.

XX.

"Feed my lambs."—John xxi, 15.

THE minister for the times, as a pastor, is *specially mindful of the young*. The young constitute a very prominent part of his charge; and his faithfulness with the children and youth of his congregation promises as much usefulness as any other department of his ministerial and pastoral efforts. The young, therefore, are never out of his mind. They have his particular attention in all his visiting from house to house. He never overlooks the children, but speaks to them kindly, draws them around him, and wins their confidence and affection. Nor does he consider them as too young to be taught of the Lord, and to be instructed, like the child Timothy, in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation. Hence, so far as practicable, the good pastor regularly catechises the children as he passes through the several neighbourhoods of his charge. Adopting the mode that seems to him the most feasible for the performance of this important duty, he makes it a steady practice, and an indispensable part of his pastoral engagements. If the children of several families may be brought together, he will have an appointed time and place for such a gathering; or, if this is inconvenient or impracticable, then he will catechise them at home, and persevere in this duty as he goes

from house to house. Thus he will become acquainted with the children, and they with him; and thus sacred impressions will almost surely be made upon their hearts which shall result in great good in time to come. Nor will the good minister neglect the young in the more public labours of the sanctuary. He will have his times for familiar addresses to them, and for catechising them in the house of God. He will come down from the pulpit, assemble the children before him, and break unto them, as they are able to receive it, the bread of eternal life.

The Sabbath-school, likewise, will receive, of course, his most careful attention, and his most hearty co-operation. He will acquaint himself with all its movements, suggest any improvements that may be desirable, and counsel and encourage the superintendents and teachers. Passing around, at times, from class to class, he will listen to the questions and answers, and the instructions communicated. He will, as often as is proper, favour the school with brief and pertinent remarks, either suggested by the lesson of the day, or by some recent intelligence, or some providential event. If such a thing be practicable, he will meet the teachers weekly, with a view to their better preparation for the exercises of the ensuing Sabbath. Nor will the Sabbath-school be forgotten in the public prayers and the public preaching. He will present its claims before the congregation, and urge the co-operation of every one for its prosperity and suc-

cess. In a word, he will unfold its great importance to the eyes of the people—he will enlist, if possible, all talents in its behalf—he will enlarge its numbers to the utmost—and he will do all possible to render its influence pure, powerful, and saving.

XXI.

“—*Full—of the Holy Ghost.*”—Acts vi, 5.

THE minister for the times is a *spiritual* pastor. All his movements and ways exhibit him as a holy and devout minister of Christ. He always and everywhere wears the aspect of unostentatious devotion. He is obviously a man of much and fervent prayer. He is always serious—always in earnest. He has little to do with the world. His conversation is mostly spiritual and gracious. He spends no time where he may not further the cause of Christ. His studies are all elevated and devotional. He gives himself wholly to the things of his high calling. He never removes his eye from the salvation of the people. Like his great Master, he goes here and there doing good; and as he goes, the fire of holy affection and spiritual joy is ever burning. He rejoices evermore, and in everything gives thanks. Everywhere he strives to awaken holy emotions and desires. He longs and labours to spread the divine flame which glows within his own heart. Hungering and thirsting

after God, the influence of all his labours is to beget the same heavenly appetites. He abides and walks in the Spirit, and the fruits of the Spirit are abundantly manifest in him. The Spirit of God dwells with him; and none that contemplate him can mistake the character of his heart, the motives which actuate him, or the tendency of his spirit and efforts. He is a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.

XXII.

"Ensamples to the flock."—1 Pet. v, 3.

THE minister for the times is an *exemplary* pastor. He is an "example of the believers" *in word*. His doctrine is sound and pure, and always communicated by him in sound speech that cannot be condemned. His lips keep knowledge; and, as the people hear the law of God at his mouth, he proclaims it to them according to judgment and truth. He brings in no strange doctrines—starts no heresies—deals in no unscriptural and unwarrantable speculations and theories; but is an example of the truth as it is in Jesus.

He is an example in *conversation*. He has put off the former conversation of the old man—that which is corrupt and vain. His conversation is now ordered aright, and is such as becometh the gospel of Christ. It is good—holy—chaste—upright—without covetousness—having Christ for its end—

heavenly—and such as ministers grace to the hearers—and such, of course, as is, in the highest degree, appropriate and exemplary.

He is an example in *charity*. He has perfect love and good-will toward all men. He has the charity that suffereth long and is kind, and goes out in deeds of goodness toward all within his reach, and especially to the destitute and suffering. His charity is fervent—it is “put on” as a garment of beauty—it is that which aboundeth, and which accompanies all the doings of the minister of Christ. It covers a multitude of sins, and beareth, and believeth, and hopeth all things.

He is an example in *spirit*. His is a renewed spirit—a spirit of meekness and quietness—a spirit of humility, gentleness, patience, and love. The Holy Spirit of God has baptized his spirit—removing from it whatever was impure, violent, and offensive, and making it a partaker of the divine nature, and ornamented with all the fruits of the Spirit.

He is an example in *faith*. He is strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. He trusts in God fully, and is never moved.

He is an example of *purity*. He keeps himself unspotted from the world. He is pure of heart, and is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and is without suspicion.

In a word, he is exemplary in all things. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He is blameless, a son of God without rebuke, and shines as a light in the world.

Conclusion.

THE MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR THE TIMES.

CONCLUSION.

It is a sublime thought that an elevated character, as a minister of Christ, is possible to every one who is moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon himself this office and work. All of such may, if they will, become eminent in their calling, and accomplish a great work in their generation. Startling, as well as deeply affecting, is such an announcement as this; while there rolls up, perchance, the dark remembrance of hours misspent and lost—of energies misdirected—of privileges dissipated and squandered—of sunny eminences far above us, whereon we might have now been treading in joyous influence and happiness. Yet it will be well for us if the interest we feel in meditations like these go not out in vain regrets. The true province of a man of God is, standing wherever he may, and amid whatever wreck or loss already sustained, to turn his eye upwards, and, rallying whatever strength he may, spread forth his wings for a lofty flight. Let him forget the things that lie behind. Let him reach to those that are before him, and press toward the mark.

It is not, of course, meant that precisely the same kind or degree of excellence may be attained by all the servants of the Lord Jesus ; but it is meant that all may do nobly—that all may fulfil their mission—that all may perform excellent things—that all may be qualified to receive, at the last, the heavenly greeting, “ Well done, good and faithful servant ! ” He is not the truly great man who, by strong native abilities, with every privilege for their cultivation and improvement, has ascended high in the scale of intellectual might and influence. But he, rather, shall be great—at least in the sight of the Lord—who, starting from any point along life’s progress, lives henceforth singly to God ;—to heaven dedicates, in good faith, every power—every activity—every talent and acquirement ;—and all whose life, from this hour, “ is Christ ” alone.

The great query, therefore, is, Will a minister of the gospel, ranging, in age, from twenty to sixty or more years—will he draw near, and make the everlasting consecration ? Renouncing this world—turning straight away from all its spirit and pursuits—and giving up every mortal hope, will he enter within the world of the Bible—will he put on the spotless and holy vestments—will he pledge every power to this great ministry—will he, till he die, know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified ? This is the solemn, the awful issue. If there be any of Christ’s ministers whom we are accustomed to denominate as ordinary—whose standing is respectable, yet who are not marked by

any extraordinary qualities—who pass reputably, from year to year, along the usual routine of ministerial duties;—or if there be those who may have fallen short of the standard of mediocrity—whose ministrations have failed to be ordinarily acceptable, and who seem destined by circumstances to move in an obscure path;—will any one of either of these classes, from this hour till death, throw, without reserve, his whole being and his whole action into the minister's work? If he will, then he shall forthwith emerge from his present sphere of movement and influence. He will be seen ascending by a progress perhaps slow at first, yet sure, and strong, and steady; and, in the great sequel, he will be standing among that select company whose mark of distinction and greatness will be that they turned many to righteousness.

We may not, then, be diverted from the plain point. The whole question is, Will one of Christ's ministers be entirely his—and that not for a day—not for an occasion—but for the residue of his life? Will he, like Payson, permit no good to be unaccomplished which, in his life, he may perform? Will he, like Edwards, on the supposition that, in his generation, there will be but one complete Christian, act just so as if he strove to be that one? Will he give himself wholly and forever away? In solemn faith, will he run a race that shall commence to-day, and close at death? Will he never, while he lives, take away his eye—his heart—his hand, from the salvation of men? Then, I repeat

it, the result is certain. As he sows he shall reap, as sure as destiny; and his success and triumph are written in heaven.

If all this be doubted, let us venture a nearer approach, and look in upon one of the men whom Christ has called into his ministry. Let us suppose him to be, as hundreds are, without much visible success, with only a moderate share of courage and hope, and, of course, with no more than an ordinary degree of zeal in any of the important departments of his work. Let us further suppose that this good man is, on some day, ruminating in solitude—lamenting his personal deficiencies, and the apparent unfruitfulness of his ministrations. As he still meditates—calls up the past—bethinks himself of his rapidly waning years, how little he has yet done, how little he seems destined to do, his feelings overcome him, and he lays his face upon his table and weeps in bitterness. We may imagine, further, that suddenly, and in the midst of his tears, a change comes over him, and a new spirit enters into him. It would seem that an unwonted baptism from eternity had touched and pervaded his being. He raises his head and looks upward; and, as he looks, he longs for the glory of God in the salvation of men. Falling upon his knees, he, in long, and sacred, and sweet communings, pledges himself, henceforth, to this one and only object. He reviews the exceeding great and precious promises, and finds and feels all to be secure. He perceives, more vividly than ever be-

fore, that it is for him *to labour and believe*. To labour, therefore, he proceeds. He struggles earnestly to supply all deficiencies pertaining to his religious and social character. He strikes for every manly, good, and beautiful trait, for his own personal adorning, and that he may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Then, again, he rearranges, so to speak, his whole intellectual furniture. He hastens to set his mind in perfect order. He adopts a new line of studies, and a new plan of prosecuting them. The Bible becomes, more than ever, the great centre of all his studies and researches. Much reading, in which he formerly indulged himself, is laid aside forever. He reads and studies now for one object—his direct improvement as a minister and preacher of the gospel. With as much care, labour, and faithfulness as possible, he prepares his sermons; and is in earnest with respect to every study and exercise that will help to give him power in preaching, in order that he may be the more successful, and more fully honour God. His industry and diligence become greatly increased. Almost mysteriously to himself, he rallies many more hours to his service than formerly. He finds himself, at early morning, with his delightful pursuits; and time, in his eye, has suddenly acquired an unearthly value. He catches at every moment, that he may press it into the service of Christ. It is not strange, then, that his preaching undergoes a sudden and decided change. It is stronger—more direct—more spiritual, con-

vincing, hopeful, animated, and joyous than before. As a consequence, the attention of the people is more fully enlisted—the congregation increases—seriousness, here and there, and, perhaps, very general, falls upon the mind. Cheered by more promising appearances, and especially encouraging himself in the Lord his God, this renewed and revived minister is all abroad among his people. Every day finds him passing from house to house, seconding, by personal address, the appeals of the pulpit, and doing everything which social and friendly intercourse may accomplish for the salvation of the flock. Every day he gains vigour and power by action. His “profiting” already appears—his ascent is obvious and beautiful. He is no longer grovelling—he is not now an ordinary man. He has thrown himself fully into all the service of his Lord, and may be seen in the front ranks of the heavenly soldiery, doing battle in the name of the God of salvation.

In thy life’s history, has there passed before thee no example answering to the above brief picture? Was there never a minister on whom the multitude looked—listened patiently to his preaching—then passed on, much as though nothing had happened? Yet that same minister came again in after time, and the hearts of men trembled as he moved among them. As he ascended the pulpit and lifted up his voice, it appeared a more than human sound, and echoed to the soul for long years afterward. Wherever he went, God went with him, and every-

where sealed his ministry. From him, as from a centre, went forth in every direction a wave of salvation, bearing a great company to the heavenly shore, whither that blessed man has gone to greet them, and rejoice with them along the bright and joyous day of immortality.

And what made the difference in the two eras of this man's ministry? Not, we answer, a difference of learning—not a change of place, of denomination, of pecuniary circumstances, or of domestic relations. The difference lay directly here. In the former era, he was but partially dedicated to the salvation of men. In the latter era, that partial dedication was full and complete. In the former era he was as too many of the present generation of ministers are. He looked toward Christ often; yet often, too, his eye wandered. At times he believed—at times he doubted. Now he laboured—then he fainted. In one hour, he ran swiftly along the race-ground;—in another, he lingered, culling flowers by the way. Sometimes lovely glimpses of heavenly glory met his vision;—then again, for long days, that blessed world was unseen. In the latter era, his eye looked right on;—he saw everlasting things—he forgot his worldly reputation—he had but one object for which to live—he laboured, with all his might, to bring to pass one result. He succeeded, and his name will be held in eternal remembrance.

It is to be feared of many ministers of Christ—especially those of the more talented and popular

class—that, especially in the earlier years of their ministry, some other darling idea influences and sways the mind, rather than the one thought of a holy eminence in the work of saving souls, and of making full proof of their ministry. Who may say, in respect to a young minister of some prominence, how often or how long his heart wanders from this grand object of the ministry of reconciliation? Who shall tell us how far, in some cases, the direct work of converting and saving men is held subordinate? Who shall write the number of days out of the days of the year when the thought of *sinners saved* hardly enters the mind? Who shall mark for us the pages—the volumes over which a minister lingers, and which have no more to do with his appropriate purpose than with any other pursuit or object whatever? Who shall calculate the amount of talent and of thought expended by ministers of the gospel, the aim and direction of which varies from a soul's conversion? Who shall number up the sermons that have looked partially toward salvation, and which have looked strongly toward objects that have nothing to do with heaven? Who shall record the conversations among ministers, and between ministers and others, from which Christ retired, and with which Satan had no controversy? Who shall compare the sighs for a sinner's rescue, and those which have been breathed forth for what, in the comparison, is lighter than the dust of the balance? Who shall count the minister's tears falling into Jehovah's bottle,

and written in His book—tears for a world's redemption? Where is the minister who, in God's name, goes forth conquering and to conquer—whose harness of warfare is never to be put off till the whole great battle is fought—who, in a sense, forgets all present victories in his mighty struggle for further and still further conquests—who would prefer the rescue of sinners perishing, rather than to witness, with the morning stars, the laying of earth's foundations—who tremulously feels that the whole world *gained*, for a soul *lost*, would be an exchange eternally disastrous?

Yet such is the true minister. Such is the high character to be attained—such is the ministerial eminence within the reach of every man in whose ear hath Jesus whispered, “Go preach my gospel.” Two solemn paths stretch themselves before this man, either one of which he may now choose, and along which to walk during the few years of this century in which he shall be seen upon the earth. He may select that path preferred, alas! by too many—the path of ministerial mediocrity. Walking there, he shall not be useless. Many an approved sermon he will preach—many a friendly conversation will he hold—many a smiling circle shall greet him—many a pleasing volume and interesting theme will attract his meditations. He shall do good—he shall be respected. When he dies, good men will bear his remains to their last resting-place; and, retiring, shall say of him, “He was a worthy minister, and he rests from his labours.”

Or, this same minister may take another path. He may strike off from the more common and beaten track, and, leaning upon eternal strength, venture away upon a more lofty and mighty career. He may urge his way to the cross, and there deliver himself up to complete and everlasting crucifixion as to all this world. He may open wide his heart for the inpouring of the heavenly influences. He may embrace his Bible, and write it, henceforth, the book of his life. He may make a covenant with all ministerial labour as his chosen portion on earth. He may vow eternal confidence in God's grace and providence, and labour on, and fight on with hope forever blooming, and with an eye unmoved from Him who is invisible. Christ, and him crucified, shall be the grand centre of all his knowledge—of all his studies—his preaching—his prayers—his exhortations—his affections—his life. He shall relinquish the world, and seize upon heaven. He shall dispense with reputation, and become a fool for the sake of God's unclouded and eternal smile. He shall break loose from men, that he may catch men; and shall give up all, that he may find all. Thus he may pass his few earthly and transient years; and dying out of this world, and arriving at the home of the blessed, there shall follow him thither, and follow him as he traverses immortal ages, a thousand delicious voices waked by him on earth, and blessing him through eternity.

“Give thyself wholly!” Ah, what volumes lie enfolded in those three words! What a power—

what a prerogative—what a privilege—are all written there ! How deep that voice, and how authoritative and creative ! And lo ! it falls upon the ear of every minister of the Lord Jesus. Thence a heavenly genius beckons to each one that he come up higher. “Emerge from thy wilderness, leaning upon the Beloved. Put on thy beautiful garments, watchman of the Lord ! Thy Saviour—thy own Redeemer and Lover, calls for thee. Who will gird himself and run ? Who will be valiant for the Lord of Hosts ? Who will dwell within His arms ? Who will take hold of infinite strength, and tower aloft amid heavenly illuminations, and run without weariness, and walk without faintness ? There opens to thee a great and effectual door, while before thee all pure and joyous spirits solicit thee away ; and behind, all solemn voices urge thee to enter and walk there.”

It will, of course, be perceived, from the observations that have preceded, that the writer is not dilating upon a possibility merely theoretical or philosophical ; but he designs rather to indicate a possibility that is actual and practical. The minister of Christ, by God’s grace, and by his accepting that grace, may, until he dies, live with his might for one purpose only, and that the great purpose for which the Lord of glory “came into the world.” The concentration of a man’s energies—the sole devotion of his life upon a single all-engrossing point, is, in the actual world, no new thing. Who can contemplate the almost superhuman energy

that, in this age, is consecrated to the service of Mammon, and longer doubt the capacity of men for such a devotion? Thousands of men in this country—men splendid in native abilities, and rich in intellectual acquisitions—have been giving several entire years of their lives to gain. This was the fair gem that filled their eye—this was the one idea—this was the goal toward which they raced like giants—this was the one point toward which every thought and every energy was bent—this was the mighty principle of all action. For this they rose early, and watched late and long—for this they left home and country, and children and wife, and churches and books, and wandered far away, and sickened and suffered, and perilled their lives and happiness, and, at least for the time, reckoned all else as loss, and, regardless of whatever lay upon the right hand or the left, reached, with longing ineffable, and with energy single, untiring, and consummate, after the golden prize. Had these same men, under heavenly influence, thus run and striven for a world's salvation, that salvation would now be well-nigh realized, and the desolations and deserts of earth would be rejoicing and blossoming as the rose.

Or, who can contemplate another class of the human race, and of whom Julius Cæsar among the ancients, and Napoleon Bonaparte among moderns, may be considered representatives, and not assent to the practical possibility of perfect consecration to one great purpose? Did such men ever, for one

moment, swerve from the object of their hearts? Looked they not right on? Was any sacrifice too great if it might contribute to the accomplishment of the object sought? Could hunger or thirst—friends or wealth—ease or honour—tears or blood—anything in earth or hell—arrest, for a moment, their onward rush for fame and power? Was not their purpose single—all-engrossing—indomitable?

Such, then, is man. He is capable of chasing, with all his might, and for a series of months and years, one great end. And if this be true of ends and objects which, in their nature, are evanescent; is it not, for a still stronger reason, true as pertaining to those objects which are divine in their nature, immortal in their duration, and infinite in their value? And have there been no moral and Christian heroes to test this capacity, and exhibit it to the eyes of men in beautiful and sublime realization? Such was Paul. It is entirely unnecessary here to review his history. From the morning of the Christian era has it shone forth, a most instructive as well as illustrious lesson touching the capabilities of a sanctified human intelligence; and will pass down to time's latest day, a charming presentation of what man may be, and what man may do, when he takes hold on God, and deeply in his heart insists that "through Christ he can do all things." Nor are we hastily to brand it as fanatical when it is claimed that another minister than Paul, and living in another age and nation, may find the "like precious faith" with him, and thus

lay hold of the "common salvation,"—yesterday, to-day, and forever the same,—and, so far as one single great purpose and pursuit are concerned, emulate and equal the heroic apostle. Examples approximating this bright consummation rise in beauty before the eye as it traces the story of the Church. And who shall tell us how many others, in different ages, have lived and died, whose names, though great and distinguished in heaven, are hidden from history? And who shall presume to affirm that, amid the Churches of Christendom, and away amid the desolations of heathenism, there may not be men who, in "high resolve," in entireness of consecration, in laborious diligence, and in readiness to suffer the loss of all things, are ranked, by the heavenly classification, with him who was sent "far hence to the Gentiles." In Southern Africa there is said to be an immense lazaret-house, enclosed by very lofty walls, and embracing fields for cultivation. It is the last earthly home of the poor leper. When the fatal marks begin to appear, the victim is led to the only entrance of that dismal prison, through which he is obliged to pass never to return. Within this abode of death are multitudes of hapless people in all stages of the disease, some without hands—others destitute of feet, tilling, as best they may, the gloomy field, that they may eat a little ere they die. Yet who shall care for their souls? Who shall go in at that dreadful gate to return no more, and speedily sicken and perish there, for the sake of pointing those

dying ones to Him who bids the leprous spirit to "be clean?" This awful question has been answered. Two missionaries, several years since, passed through that gate, and selected that lazareth-house as their field of labour; while others stood ready, when these should die, to fill their places.

But whence and what is this spirit? From what source came this strange courage—this singular disinterestedness, self-denial, and devotion? It is nothing less, we answer, than the apostolic spirit;—it is the bold martyr's courage;—it is the strength which a man derives when he lies within God's arms;—it is the devotion of one who fears nothing when God and angels are with him;—who knows that if death is near, heaven is as near;—who loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself; and is ready to go with Jesus "both into prison and to death."

It is a false, a mistaken modesty in Christ's ministers of this generation, or rather, it is a pernicious lack of genuine faith, and of Scriptural appreciation of the "glorious gospel of the blessed God," when these ministers decline the notion of their title to the apostolic fire, courage, devotion, and success. Christ's apostles, aside from himself, were as other men. So are we. Christ's apostles, united to himself, could do all things. So can we. Nor is the present interesting age of the world any time to sympathize with the weak spirit of Shammua and his inglorious compeers. Caleb and Joshua, rather, are to be our exemplars here; and with

hearts firm like theirs, and with the eye steadily upon the minister's lofty and true position, "let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able."

But if well able, through grace, to be eminently and fully devoted as ministers of Christ, then how plain—how without mistake is our duty! There is absolutely no room left for hesitation, and we must be given wholly to our ministry.

And if the reasons for such exclusive and entire devotion were to pass under review, we should, doubtless, among other considerations, be reminded of *the solemn greatness* of the ministerial work. Who can think of the requisite goodness and purity of the gospel minister—his requisite studies—his requisite preaching—his requisite praying—his requisite social and pastoral labours—his requisite care and "eternal vigilance"—all taken in connexion with that most momentous reckoning of his at the day of judgment;—who can meditate upon these things, and still find license or disposition for but a partial offering and consecration to this high calling? If one whom we are accustomed to contemplate as almost an angel in human form, rather than as one of us—if he was prompted to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" then what must, indeed, be the sad deficiency of him who adopts the ministerial work only *as one* of his frail life's pursuits? Assuredly, no minister of Christ can be so complete a novice as, for a single moment, to suspect, in the gospel ministry, a lack of scope for the largest and best disciplined of human pow-

ers, and for the fullest and most protracted play of the mightiest energies of man. The vast work that "might fill an angel's heart, and filled a Saviour's hand," is surely such as is more than sufficient for human ability, and at sight of which a thoughtful man must faint but for the blissful promise, "I am with you always." O! there is no work—no profession or calling—no mighty achievement pertaining to human affairs, that can bear measurement with the sacred minister's vocation. Does the agriculturist lay out his fields, and plant orchards and vineyards, and gather the harvests of the "golden year?" The minister cultivates deathless souls, and deposits seed whence is to germinate blooming and undying happiness; and the sheaves he shall bring will be resplendent ranks of souls redeemed and saved forever. Does the merchant go into "such a city," and continue there, and there expend every energy until he grows rich at last? The minister passes into that same city, and day and night, and from year to year, bargains, and plans, and negotiates for ages long to come, and selling all he has, purchases a treasure that shall be existing and productive when the sun shall shine no more. Do a hundred ships, traversing vast oceans, pour, at length, their crowded companies upon "golden strands," there to gather the shining dust until, burdened with riches, they come home again to rejoice in the fruit of their toils and wanderings? The minister of the kingdom, meanwhile, passing here and there, searches for goodly pearls,

and gold of another species ; and persuades a multitude to provide for themselves bags which wax not old ; and wreathes a crown of rejoicing which, long after earth and its treasures are burned up, still “fadeth not away.” Does the attorney pledge himself to the threatened criminal, give days and nights of time to the preparation of his argument, and, as he pleads for the dear life of the prisoner, exhaust, in his earnestness, the last energies of his intellectual and physical being ? The minister is an advocate in a sublimer cause, and his talents are enlisted in a more momentous issue. He studies, and toils, and pleads, and weeps, that he may save a man from infernal executioners, and avert, if he may, the pangs of the undying death. Does the statesman meditate long and deeply, and call into exercise the maturest knowledge, and bring to his aid the most comprehensive views, for the promotion and security of national interests ? The minister consults and plans for the welfare of *all* nations. He is a statesman acting in behalf of the race ; and laying plans broad, and deep, and sure, for the prosperity of that kingdom that is to fill the whole earth, absorb all other kingdoms, and is to last forever. Does the minister of state pass away to a foreign court, to negotiate there the important matters arising from international relations and usages ? The minister of religion has a higher commission. He is an ambassador of the King of kings, sent forth not to a single nation, but to the world ; and the interests concerning which he treats

are the interests of eternity. Is it a great thing that the soldier flies to the battle—bears up manfully against advancing legions—braves the cannon's mouth—and, amid thunderings, and crashings, and confusion, and carnage, and shrieks, and dying cries, rushes on to victory? There is another soldier whose whole life is a warfare—who is a captain among the sacramental hosts of God's elect—whose contest is not with men, but with Satan and all his works—urging perpetual battle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places—fights a good fight—and is more than conqueror—and wears the palm of final and immortal victory.

But what master hand shall portray the magnitude of the preacher's work? Who shall write its lofty character, and unfold its transcendent importance? That familiar adage, that "if religion be anything, it is everything," finds a direct and solemn echo in the genius of the minister's calling. Truly, if there be anything here, then there is everything. If there is a hell such as the Bible reveals—if unregenerate men are actually so exposed to that terrible world as that nothing is necessary but death to bring them directly and irreversibly there—if, on the other hand, there be a Saviour, and such a Saviour as shall not only bear those who trust in Him to perfect safety, but shall also confer upon them glory, honour, and immortal happiness—and if, yet further, that Saviour

has commissioned me to be an agent, in his name, for effectuating this amazing rescue—for hiding a sinner from that frightful and everlasting storm, and pointing him, and urging him upward to that eternal glory;—if all these several things be so, then is this question forever settled. Add no other idea—it is enough. There is no work like my work this side of heaven! Mine is an agency whose influence swells toward infinity, and darts forward to mingle itself with endless years. Mine is a work at the very contemplation of which I faint and perish, unless borne up upon the everlasting arms. Spare us and pity us, good Lord! who, in thy inscrutable ways, hast seen fit to deposit this vast treasure in earthen vessels. Go preach my gospel—he that believeth shall be saved—he that believeth not, shall be damned. Astounding commission! Take now thy Bible—that celestial mirror—and venture one deliberate and affecting glance at that damnation. Turn, then, thy mirror, and venture another deliberate and affecting glance at that salvation. Pause, now, and meditate from what authority proceeds this great commission. Then, lastly, tell us—tell us, if thou art able, what it is to *preach*! Tell us if a man, on whom this work and duty lie, can spare a day—an hour, to look at aught besides. Say whether he will wish or attempt to yield up his commission, and leave his one work, so long as, with his “latest breath, he may but gasp His name.”

A second reason, rising spontaneously before the

mind, urging the minister's entire devotion to his work, is the immense extent of that work, as objectively considered. "The world is my parish," said one of the most remarkable and successful of modern ministers; and saying this, he announced a great and vital principle pertaining to the Christian ministry. In a very affecting sense does every gospel minister belong to the world, and the world belong to him. The moral condition of the race needs hardly to be written here. The world "lieth in the wicked one." If your charity can extend so far, you may mark off one hundred millions as being within the influence of the gospel. Beyond these, are about eight hundred millions who may be written as without the religion of the Lord Jesus. Something like this is the condition of "the world," named in the apostolic commission;—the commission which we suppose to be still binding upon the ministers and Churches of Christendom. These Churches, of different names,—especially during the last half century,—have been looking with some interest toward this wide-spread field; while some efforts have been put forth, and organizations have been reared, and men have gone abroad, and have begun to act against the power of darkness, that has long held so great a portion of the world within its chains. Yet may it be said, most truly, that the work of evangelizing the heathen world is but begun; nor will it be finished in many thousand years, if the rate of progress, in time to come, is to be only as great as even within the last fifty

years. There spreads out before us, then, *a world* to be enlightened, renewed, and saved ; while this is to be done by Christian effort, in union with the grace and power of Him who is represented as “ working with ” his faithful people.

But what is the class that is to lead on in this mighty enterprise ? Who are they that appear to stand the most deeply and affectingly responsible ? Who are they but the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ ? Who shall go forth to this work if these are seen to linger ? What army, or division of an army, shall rush forth to battle, if the captains are backward and cowardly ? That the united force of all Christians upon earth is requisite for this great work of saving the world, will never be seriously questioned. But who will come up, with all their energies, to the help of the Lord, if the ministry are but partially devoted ? It will never be ; and the entire consecration of gospel ministers, of every denomination, is absolutely indispensable. This is the first thing necessary, and who shall picture forth this necessity ! Hundreds of millions of human beings like ourselves, for lack of vision, perishing forever ! There is that, in the keeping of a few, which has saved those few, and which was designed by the Giver to save the whole, and which the few are commissioned to communicate universally, and with all diligence, that the world perish not. Shall the hands of any minister of Christ be ever, while he lives, put forth to any other work ? I remember to have looked upon a picture where

there appeared to rise, before the eye, a field vast and limitless, as when one stands and looks away upon the heaving and shoreless sea; or pauses in astonishment as, travelling toward the setting sun, he comes to where the boundless prairie rises on his sight. In every direction, wide over that far-reaching area, stood, waving in beauty, a harvest tall, and dense, and white, all waiting to be gathered. Full upon the foreground, and with that measureless expanse stretching itself before them, stood two or three reapers, ready with their sickles. But what, thought I, are these "few labourers," traversing that "great harvest?" They are just what our few hundred missionaries are, compared with the hundreds of millions that crowd the wide arena of heathenism. If to one labourer in this field there were a thousand, there would be not one too many;—all would find an abundance of duties and of labours in leading this sinful world to repentance and to heaven. If the present generation of Christian ministers and missionaries all commence to-morrow, and, until their day of death, live, and toil, and contrive only for the illumination and salvation of men, they will all die leaving still much of the great harvest ungathered and untouched. Or suppose it otherwise. Imagine that all the world had now been reached by the gospel message, and all its millions were sitting at the feet of Jesus, and in their right mind—all, save one slender colony, away upon some isle of the ocean. Under these circumstances, were the question pro-

posed whether this great world of ministers and Christians should rally every available and possible energy and means for the conversion and salvation of that one colony, would there be a moment's hesitation? What, then, should be every minister's position as the world actually is? If the salvation of the few should enlist, if necessary, every ability and talent of the many, shall not the salvation of the many much more command the entire dedication of the few? All this is perfectly conclusive in the eye of reason and judgment. There is no difference of opinion among all truly good men touching this great matter. But we fail to *feel*. Our hearts—our deep and holy sympathies—are not excited. Perchance the very magnitude of the work exerts an influence to discourage and chill our energies; while we forget that when all ministers and Churches shall march up to this sublime enterprise with apostolic faith, energy, love, and perseverance, the "Lord of the harvest" will be there with the strength which is almighty, speedily to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The work, it is true, is great. It seems, in its magnitude, to approach immensity; yet, under the circumstances, there must be no discouragement. All that is wanted *of thee*, is thy perfect consecration until death. Then shall thy debt be discharged—thy last battle finished—and commenced thine everlasting peace and rest.

And here is suggested a third reason, mightily drawing every minister to entire devotedness to his

work. I refer to the brief period of his earthly ministry. The brevity of human life is a thought harmonizing with all observation, and assented to by every one; while yet it is deeply realized, as seems probable, by very few indeed, even of serious and holy men. The utter darkness resting on the future, especially upon the month, or even the year of our decease, exerts an influence essentially to hinder most people from properly appreciating its solemn nearness. "We shall soon depart," saith the thoughtful man, and all the world assents. But what means this term "soon?" and who considers it—who defines it? Who attaches much of any meaning to it? Who but eschews all severe interpretation of so sombre an expression, and is fully content to leave it under as broad and indefinite a sense as is at all decent or admissible? The uncertain space is, after all, not only hoped, but secretly expected, to be somewhat protracted; and what, through great mercy, we do not and cannot see, is believed, as well as wished, to be in the distance. And yet there have been exceptions to these remarks. We have all read of men who, not in poetry, but in stern reality, appeared to hold their day of death as being at hand, and whose diligence and singleness of pursuit seemed essentially modified by such a view. "He walked with death always in sight," writes Mrs. Fletcher of her husband. "About two months ago he came to me and said, 'My dear love, I know not how it is, but I have a strange impression that death is near

us, as if it were to be some sudden stroke upon one of us ; and it draws out all my soul in prayer that we may be ready.' ” Instances of this sort may, perhaps, be special ; yet does it well become every mortal man, and particularly every minister of Christ, to “ walk with death always in sight.” It is quite likely that some good man will take pains to peruse these brief pages, and who, within three years following, will be away in paradise. As he reads, he will not believe in such a prospect. There will be too much mistiness—too much dreaminess—as he looks that way ; or, more likely, he will place the date of his transfer some distance beyond. Yet should he not—should he resign his expectations of tarrying a longer space, and give indulgence to the suspicion that all he may do as a minister of the gospel must be done in these few brief years, it is not for us to assert, indeed, what would be all the influence of such anticipations. But it may be no harm to ask whether, upon the hypothesis just named, the man would not contemplate with new views the amazing worth of a day of time—whether hundreds of books and papers would not remain untouched by him—whether many visits and conversations, heretofore indulged in, would not be henceforth omitted—whether the interests of this world would not be likely to attract much less of his attention—whether the blessed Bible would not become, more than ever, the book of his heart—whether the conversion and salvation of the souls of men, to the farthest extent possible, would not

become his longing desire and strenuous effort—whether it would matter at all with him as to the locality of his brief ministry, except as it might affect the amount of good which he should accomplish—and whether, in fact, all his arrangements would not, if practicable, be made to harmonize with, and be conducive to, his largest usefulness?

Now this whole result, so probable to arise from a strong and definite view of life's startling brevity, should be actually realized in the history of all Christ's holy ministry. "This I say, brethren, the time is short." Some of us will linger beyond the three forthcoming years. Others will retire within that transient period. It is idle to ask *who!* God knoweth. An inquiry infinitely more consequential is, whether, if we live, we shall live unto the Lord, or whether, if we die, we shall die unto the Lord? and whether, therefore, if we live or die, we shall, in either case, be the Lord's?

Let us withdraw from what is shadowy and doubtful, and linger, for a moment, with what appears more clear and certain. Through mercy, we are launching away upon the second "half-time" of this eventful century. But who shall finish it? What minister, now living and acting, shall be present at the winding up of the nineteenth century? Some stripling, hale and strong, whose voice, for the first time, has just essayed to breathe the gospel message—some such one may reach that far-off evening, and hearken as the awful knell is sounded of yet another of time's passing ages. Meanwhile,

almost all of us will be absent! Many—many will have been long since dead—our work on earth all finished forever—our solemn account sealed by the recording angel, and passed up to the great Judge—and before us opening, in infinite sublimity, an eternity that shall be according to our works. This may be put down *as a certainty!*—at least so far a certainty as to exclude doubt. In other words, in reference to the narrowness of the space before us, so much, on the one hand, is not revealed as to produce terror, or injurious solicitude; while, on the other, so much *is* revealed as that all the dear delights, possessions, and hopes of this world should be as though they were not, and to induce us to be labouring, night and day, for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, and doing with our might all our Master's work.

Passing, from this present, backward a hundred years, and on each side of the Atlantic there stood an eminently holy and successful minister of the Lord Jesus, born within four months of each other; differing somewhat, it is true, in speculative theology, yet of one spirit—one prayer—one work. Entering the afternoon of their century, one of them presently, and in the zenith of his extraordinary powers, passed away to immortality. The other lingered still on earth, and laboured on through many a toilsome summer, until, thirty years after the departure of his earlier contemporary, he went to hail him in the heavenly country. Might a man have stood, a century ago, and seen in prospect,

as we see in retrospect, the death-dates of Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, what ought he to have inferred other than what we so deeply feel and know? namely, that their space thenceforward was brief indeed—that though one should reach beyond the other, yet the latest one would soon be called; while, years before that century would run out, the grave would hide all that was mortal of them both.

There in that mirror read thy certain history, minister of God! Was the space brief before those great and godly men? Yes, for—they are gone! Was it well that, seeing, as they did, life's brevity, they laboured with their might—and lived for God's cause alone—and ran a glorious race—and seized a crown at last, starry, and glorious, and fadeless? Now turn away from "things behind;"—lay grasp upon thy own great destinies, and, in the name of God, make haste! Thy day, at longest, shall be brief—thy sun rolls toward its setting—thy work—O! how great, how affecting, how momentous is it! Thy heaven—O! what influences, springing from these few fleeting years, shall pervade it—shall tinge it, through eternity!

Another reason for single and unreserved devotion of the minister to his one work, is seen in the fact that all religious enterprise and prosperity will be lacking in very exact proportion to his failure of such devotion. It must be allowed, it is true, that an apparent decline and deadness in religious things has, at times, existed where the ministry have not seemed to be deficient in holy consecra-

tion and earnestness. But where there *is* this deficiency, are not the results almost invariably disastrous? If there be a minister who gives himself to his proper work but in part,—if a portion of his time be devoted to literary, political, or philosophical pursuits, having no special reference to his own calling,—or if he be given to business speculations, with a view to earthly gain,—or if he spend many hours in listlessness, mental dissipation, or mere gossiping,—if, in a word, his mind, his heart, and hands, are much otherwise occupied than with the salvation of men, then all that man's deficiencies will be felt throughout his charge, and far beyond, just as surely as there will be shadow when the sun is obscured, or a parched earth and blighted verdure when the rains of heaven fail. Assuredly the law of cause and effect—of means and results—finds no exception in the world of religious action and enterprise. And as a man's ordinary and secular affairs will be almost certain to suffer and decline in the absence of his careful attention and strong devotion, so, in a given Church especially, if the minister—the preacher and teacher—the pastor—the exemplar—the guide and guard—if he be lingering and dull—his movements slow, indefinite, and nerveless—his communications jejune, feeble, and uninteresting—his influence toward good but slender, sickly, or sometimes even doubtful—then alas for the precious gospel enterprise, so far as that voice is heard, and that name is known! Religion pure and undefiled will hardly revive under such a ministra-

tion. There will often, it is true, be one here and there who, in spite of the minister's unfaithfulness, will hold fast his integrity, and will mourn and weep apart, as he contemplates the decline of spiritual religion, and the sad influence so prominent in producing it. Yet the great majority of the Church will be as weak in faith and effort, as partial in their devotion, and as dull in their religious emotions, as their minister; while among the unregenerate there will be little awakening and inquiry after salvation, and few will take hold of the path of life. The ways of Zion will mourn, her solemn feasts will be neglected; while iniquity, with bold and shameless front, will stalk abroad.

How can we otherwise than tremble in view of the awful responsibility of the Christian ministry! The Church of God is imaged forth as *the light of the world*. And yet, if this light become darkness, how great is that darkness! But if the Church of Christ becomes darkness—in other words, if the glorious light of gospel truth and holiness is not reflected forth from the body of Christ's professed followers, where lies the prominent difficulty? *It lies in the ministry*. These are the great lights. These are the stars of God. These are, in the most emphatic sense, to be "burning and shining." He maketh His ministers a flaming fire. These, above all others, are to arise and shine. The prospects of success held forth in the Scriptures to faithful ministers are, as we shall afterwards illustrate, as sure as the word of God. The inference

is direct and immediate, that the unfaithful minister who fails to secure the promised blessings and usefulness, is culpable for such a momentous failure, and will be held responsible. He is placed a watchman. If, seeing the evil coming, he warns the transgressor—warns him faithfully and perseveringly, then, such sinner dying in his sins, the watchman has delivered his own soul. Yet if, seeing the evil approaching, he fails to give the requisite warning, the transgressor shall perish; but when inquisition shall be made, at whose hands will his blood be required? In other words, a gospel minister failing of the holy eminence in his calling which, by grace, he is fully competent to attain, and, as a certain consequence of his short-coming, there being a loss to the Church—a loss to heaven—a loss that undying ages cannot repair,—tell us, whosoever is able, what shall be the reckoning of that minister at the great trying day? Now the *loss*, in the event of the minister's failure, appears to be as certain as the operation of any of nature's laws. A minister of Christ, being faithful, will perform a good on earth which, he being unfaithful, will never have an existence. And who shall say that this most lamentable of all losses is not now in process every day, and wide among the Churches and ministers of Christendom? Why linger the chariot-wheels of the great Christian enterprise? Why are so many hundred Churches at a stand, or realizing but a movement that is retrograde? Why are millions of the heathen perishing without the

light of life? and why this ruinous lingering of the word of God that it fly not like fire in stubble, rushing and sweeping through the world? Ask no such question. The case is one of the plainest in philosophy. The existing phenomena are precisely what, without miracle, they must be—precisely what, according to the law of cause and effect, they should be. Such as are the means, so is the development. As is the sowing, so is the reaping,—and so it will continue. The prosperity of Christ's cause on earth is proportionate to the faithfulness of his ministry, nor will this law of progress be altered or modified. The ministers of the Lord Jesus taking the stand which they have heretofore taken, the gospel will progress as heretofore; and if so, long ages must elapse ere this lost world shall be illuminated and evangelized. While there is so much to attract the minister's eye away from Jesus and the cross—while Christians of different names have so much to do for the spirit of sect—while so many are seeking for comfortable and popular livings, rather than asking, "Where are the souls?"—while so many are lured away within the bowers of literature—while so many are pausing to cater for a little of the gold that perishes—while so many forget the toil, the cross-bearing, the self-denial, the hardness, the intense and deathless devotion of the true soldier of the Lord—while so many think more of a name and fame on earth than of the "glory and honour," and the "everlasting remembrance," amid the countless myriads of the re-

deemed—in one word, while earth instead of heaven attracts the eye of the minister, expect no special progress of the kingdom of God. Marvel not at the slow and lingering march of churches and revivals, nor at the uprising and outspreading of iniquity in the land and world.

It is with a sadness which is unutterable that the writer feels himself called upon, in the present connexion, to take up a strain like this; yet, in the soberest and maturest judgment which he is able to exercise, he views the ministers of Jesus Christ to be mainly responsible for the present moral aspect of this fallen world. These are a class of men such as there is none other. They are appointed of the great Bishop to co-operate with himself for the eternal salvation of the human race. For this they are *set apart*;—set off from this world and all its pursuits, and assigned over to a mysterious and solemn fellowship and co-labouring with God for the working out of a good, compared with which the whole physical universe is less than nothing and vanity. This ministry, in the strength of God, can take this world before the knell of this passing century shall be tolled. They are well able to go up and possess the whole land. *Will* they thus advance and conquer? Not, I answer, as they are now. Judgment must begin at the house of God. There must be a great reformation in the sanctuary and at the altar; and may God, in boundless mercy, hasten it!

These remarks will not have failed to suggest to

the reader the counter reason to the one last specified, pressing an entire dedication of the gospel minister to his one work ;—the reason that the success of a fully consecrated ministry is certain ; and, under its influence, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will hasten to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The devoted minister's success has been frequently referred to along the foregoing pages ; yet a few additional observations in this place will perhaps receive the indulgence of the reader. If the abundant testimony of the Holy Scriptures, announcing the results of a faithful ministry, is to be taken as evidence applicable to the case in hand, then, with such testimony, we may rest this great argument, and never doubt again. Select out the following single specimen—assure us of our fellowship with Timothy in its application, and all is gained. To him the apostle writes, “Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine, continue in them, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” Here all is plain ;—there is no poetry—no mystery—no possibility of mistaking the apostle's logic ; and he that runs may read and understand. The only question remaining, then, is, Will a minister take heed, in a gospel sense, to himself and to the doctrine ? and will he continue to do so till he dies ? Then he shall save himself, and them that hear him. In other words, he shall, in the best possible sense, be surely and widely successful—he shall accomplish the great object of the Christian ministry—he shall be in-

strumental of saving sinners for whom Christ died, and secure for himself a mansion of rest in the everlasting kingdom. Now multiply this great, this enchanting result of a single devoted minister's operations, by the number of all the ministers of the gospel scattered over the world, added to the number that shall arise during the next fifty years, and report to us, if you are able, the astonishing developments that shall mark that "half time" of this world's history. We can specify but very partially; yet O! how like the garden of God would be the aspect which Christian lands would wear! Along their length and breadth what precious and long-continued revivals of pure religion would soon appear, embracing within their influence large multitudes of every grade of talent and of every degree of human wickedness. Especially would a thousand thousands of the children and youth of Christendom be converted and given to the Lord Jesus, out of whom he would not fail to marshal a "great company," and point their young and ardent spirits away over the vast field of the world all white to the harvest, and all waiting for the reaper's sickle. Abroad amid that harvest they would speedily be scattered, garnering, with their might, the ripened sheaves within the heavenly treasury—sustained, amid the burden and heat of the day, by the great Master, who will be in the field "working with" them, and who will give them wages unto life eternal. An amount of talent vast and incalculable would at once be enlisted, and everlastingly pledged

for the spiritual and immortal interests of mankind ; and an influence, strong as the breath of omnipotence, and such as no former age had ever witnessed, would sweep in every direction through the world. Prayer—the prayer which prevails—would, every day and night, rise on the ear of God—a cloud of incense ever gathering, and enlarging, and deepening, and towering heavenward, and such as never before rolled up before the mercy-seat. Infinite faithfulness—infinite love and pity could not withstand the mighty and unyielding influence. Heaven and earth would meet. God would dwell among men, and his Spirit would breathe subduing and holy whisperings, running along the hills and vales of earth. The watchmen, forgetful of their minor differences, would see eye to eye—rejoice in each other's labours and successes—and, joining hands for a single object, would increase and accelerate a hundred-fold the moral power of the Churches. Meanwhile, great and effectual doors would open in all directions. Satan's power over the princes and tribes of the earth would give way—the advancement of true religion would be sure and rapid—a nation would be born in a day—and the kingdoms of this world, in quick succession, become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, and the Church of the living God would prepare herself to greet the fair morning of millennial glory. The delicious anticipations of prophecy would hasten to be answered in joyous realization ; and the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the

kingdom under the whole heaven, would be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions would serve Him. Then the meek would inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace—sitting, every man, under his own vine and fig-tree, having none to make afraid; and there would be naught to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain.

Should views like these appear, after all, too dreamy or fanciful, allow us to venture a sober calculation, based upon the hypothesis of perfect ministerial devotedness. Let us compute, then—though the estimate is far too low—the present number of Protestant and evangelical ministers in the world to be twenty thousand. We may reckon the average time which these have yet to live and labour to be until 1860. It is a moderate estimate that, during those ten years, each of these entirely devoted ministers will lead at least one hundred souls to Christ; thus making the whole number converted from 1850 to 1860 to be two millions of souls. Making proper allowance for deaths and other circumstances, we may, especially in a holy Church, under an eminently holy ministry, reckon upon one out of twenty of the above number of converts, or one hundred thousand, being called to preach the gospel, and 1865 to be the average year of commencing their ministry. Estimating, as above, their average term of labour to be ten years, and their average usefulness

as before, their converts will, in 1875, amount to ten millions. Proceeding with the calculation, and allowing the same average amount of time, and the same average usefulness to each one, and the same proportion of ministers to the whole number converted, and it will appear that, in the year 1920, seventy years from the present date, the number of Christians on the earth would be twelve hundred and fifty millions, which will, probably, be not far from the whole population of the globe at that period of time. Hence, if the above estimates are sufficiently moderate,—and I see not but they are so,—then this whole world may be evangelized within seventy years from this date; and the children are already born along whose evening of life would be shining, in cloudless splendour, the Sun of righteousness from pole to pole, wide over this redeemed and rejoicing earth.

O! who, being pervaded with the strength of the eternal, will rise up—or, rather, who will *fail* to rise, and strike for this great and glorious consummation? Who, from the sacred band of “twenty thousand,” will linger, and query, and doubt, and stagger; and at the last, with scorching tears, steep his death-pillow, in bitter remembrance of a life but half devoted to a world’s eternal rescue? Long—O! how long!—has this great cause been lingering, while millions on millions of our wicked race have been crowding the solemn pathway up to the judgment-seat; and still, in ranks dark, and dense, and far-reaching, they pass away uncheered—unsaved.

The world is not given to the saints of the Most High, for they hesitate to go up, in the length and breadth thereof, and possess it. At this grave moment—this noon of a remote and late-coming century—this old age of time, all appears to be waiting. I see an awful finger pointing away, in different directions, over the world, then lifting itself upward toward heaven; while a voice from deep eternity steals on the ear and whispers, “Who will go for us?” Who will join hands with the great God in making a short work upon the earth? How many will take hold of the arm which is almighty, and proceed, in great and good earnest, to wind up the affairs of this wicked world, and lead on, presently, the promised reign of the Prince of peace? Must it be that centuries, long, and slow, and wretched, shall still roll over this sin-stricken world, and the bright morning of the saints’ immortal festival be still deferred? Is it so that all along those coming centuries our poor bodies must still be scattered and dissolved within the noisome tomb? Do we not already sympathize as the whole earth groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now? And while, for long generations, there has been the earnest expectation, and the waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, do not even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body? Is not this sad pause of centuries in the history of human redemption deferring just so long the glorious resurrection, for which the saints of all ages are wait-

ing with "earnest expectation" and intense desire ;—deferring just so long the perfect inheritance of "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world?"

Haste we then, with effort strong, united, holy, deathless, to bring this world to Christ. Haste ; for a righteous God, and his whole vast kingdom of righteousness, will approve the enterprise, and the eternal throne itself is no more sure than our success and triumph.

And now, finally, had I power, with what deep interest would I strike forward, and expatiate, in the winding up of this argument, upon the great sequel of the faithful minister's history. But how shall mortal man venture to tread this holy ground ! What adventurous eye shall essay to follow him as, weary and sickly—his work completed—his longing eye turned upward—he puts off the harness of warfare, and goes home to God ! Much of the scene now is shut away from mortal view. In that paradise whither he is "caught up," much that exists, and much that passes, is "unspeakable," and never yet has been named or imagined in earthly circles. It doth not yet clearly appear what we shall be. A few visions dim, yet beyond measure enchanting, rise upon the sight as the eye looks steadily upward. Christ is there—there visibly in his glorious body—the chief among ten thousands—the Desire of all nations—the everlasting King of glory. Light is there—not that of the sun and moon, but the glory of God and the Lamb.

There is the New Jerusalem, with its glorious walls and streets of gold. The river of life is there; while stretching afar upon either bank are blooming those groves of beauty whose monthly fruits are for the healing of the nations. Along the heavenly scenery appear mansions reposing in peacefulness, of architecture divine, and in the prospect lovelier far than what was sung of old to be beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. Meanwhile, a strange population is there—a select people—the good that, in every nation, have lived and died. No sinner is there—no sin—no enemy—nothing that defileth—nothing hurtful. No crying is there—nor weeping—nor toil—nor fears. But holiness is there; for all are redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb. Beauty is there; for those forms are like unto Christ's glorious person. Love and friendship are there; for these are inseparable from heavenly spirits. Rest is there; for the last battle is fought—the last trial has been endured—there is no more sorrow and pain, for the former things are passed away. Abundance is there; for they hunger and thirst no more, neither doth the sun light on them, nor any heat. Music is there; for oft amid those mansions, and along the banks of the river of life, swells from delicious voices, and from the harps of God, the song of redemption. Worship is there; for the seer, as he listened, heard, away in heaven, a great voice of much people, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord our

God!" And suddenly a great chorus, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundings, rolled back the solemn and glad response, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Honour and dignity are there; for we hear of kings and priests, and spotless robes, and glorious crowns, and victory, and inheritance of all things, and fellowship with God. Safety, too, is there—a dear and precious possession, unknown and unfelt on earth, but found and realized in heaven. There shall be no more curse. Joy is there—the joy which is exceeding—unspeakable—full of glory. All is over—all is gained! And immortality is there. They die no more. The life there, is life eternal. The riches wax not old. The crowns fade away—never. The kingdom is everlasting—the inheritance is incorruptible—the glory is far more exceeding, and weighty, and eternal—the reign and the triumph are forever and ever.

Such are some of the notes of the heavenly happiness that have been sketched for us on the page of revelation. And O! can it be that something like this is the sure prospect of the faithful Christian, and the faithful minister of the gospel? Tell us—tell us, if it be so, that this—far more than this, lies just before the man of God! Will he not only be there presently, but will he be prominent there? Will many a loved one, aided to everlasting life through his ministrations, greet him at his coming? Dying, will he not merely rest from his labours, but will his works follow him? Shall the

blessed impulses proceeding from him here, pass onward to far distant years, and, in forms of ever-growing and immortal loveliness, add a charm unutterable to his heavenly rejoicing? Will there be resplendent glory and dignity in the heavenly world to the man who, during his day of earthly toil and suffering, turns many to righteousness? Am I dreaming here, or am I grasping a sublime verity, breathed from the lips that cannot lie and cannot trifle? Pity us, O God! and let us not sink and faint under a contemplation so awful, and beaming with such exceeding glory! Nerve me to save a soul, and to introduce him to the heavenly glory! and when I shall be gone hence, give me, at some time, to meet that redeemed spirit in the heavenly assemblies, and with him to walk beside those peaceful waters, and taste those healing fruits, and converse of friends and joys that are never to die, and give me to listen as from his harp of immortality awake the anthems of heaven. Thus let me contemplate him from age to age; and after millions on millions of the years of eternity shall have passed, let me be near to witness his still advancing glory and blessedness, and be a partaker of his everlasting joy. Nay, not of his alone. O! give me to be thus a partaker of the joy of "many!"

THE END.

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